

POEMS
LYRICAL AND DRAMATIC

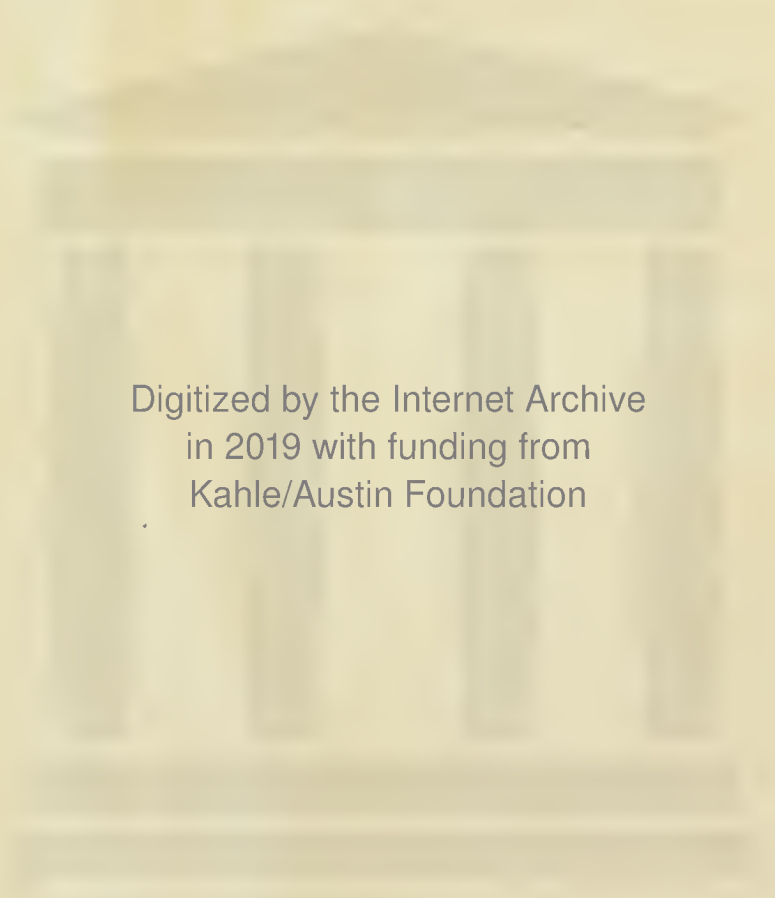
W. Browne

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POEMS:
LYRICAL AND DRAMATIC,

BY

JOHN HENRY BROWN.

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TO ISABEL.

*As, hand in hand, we strayed
Along the world's broad highway,
Our steps we oft delayed
By many a lane and bye-way :*

*Where flowers and grasses sprang,
Daisies and kingcups yellow,
And, blithely swinging, sang
The birds their rondeaus mellow.*

*These flowers and grasses, Sweet,
You bade me pluck and cherish ;
Unto you, as is meet,
I bring them, ere they perish.*

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I.

POEMS and SONNETS

AT THE RIVER.

A sea of buttercups to pass,
Foam-white with isles of daisy-stars,
To where the river, smooth as glass,
Slides o'er its stones and shingly bars.
'Tis June—her flowers, her sky, her sun,
The glory of the year begun,
Though late, for June is well-nigh done.

All grey-blue softness is the sky,
Calm-leaning o'er a peaceful land,
The grass o'er-tops me where I lie,
The river runs at my right hand ;
Far down its shining depths the trees
Reverse their branches ; and the breeze
Brings perfume from fair upland leas.

So gently wave the buttercups,
The taller grasses sway in tune,
An insect each rich floweret sups,
The waters shimmer in the noon,
At intervals a city call,
Beyond the distant waterfall,
Strikes o'er the quiet wounding all.

A dragon-fly lights on my hand,
A moment hovers, and is gone.
A rusty-coated bee takes stand
A golden-chambered flower upon ;
Makes ruthless pillage, leisurely

AT THE RIVER.

Roams further, while a lusty fly,
All green and gold, drones idly by.

Softly a shadow falls—then bright
The sudden splendor gilds the scene.
The birds pipe up in rapture light,
A new-born breeze comes out unseen ;
Flits o'er the mead on joyous wing,
The verdure-lines in motion swing,
The heart of nature seems to sing.

The shadows on the river's breast,
The river slipping to the sea,
The great sun sloping to the West,
The happy haunts of bird and bee,
The clover blooms, the daisies white,
The dainty king-cups, virgin-bright—
June in her majesty and might.

FROM WHAT FAIR WESTERN LAND, O CRESCENT
MOON ?

From what fair Western land, O crescent moon,
Where carnival is held this happy night.
Beams on our earth thy bow of silver light
The dusk air through, that, moveless as in swoon,
Stirs not the faint cloud-curtains whence thy boon
To brooding thought brings store of fancies bright ?
The stars, wan-misted, nod in drowsy plight ;
E'en Mars glows meekly in this night's dim noon.

These sleeping dream : but thou, O beacon fair,
Lightest o'er liquid pathways of the deep,
To where Hesperian gardens bloom and bear,
To where Romance, on many an airy steep,
Her castles builds : where life knows naught of care,
And youth and love unending revel keep.

IN THE TWILIGHT.

HE.

Fades day's last smile, and now the eve,

In dusk-gray sandals, slowly comes
Athwart yon hills ; the clouds receive

The glory that her touch benumbs—

Her soothing touch—the thicket hums,
The low wind whispers in the trees,
And careless we of fate's decrees,
This day's wine drunken to the lees.

SHE.

Ah, sunny day of gold and blue,

Day sent by love for love's dear sake ;
Where love doth reign forever true,

The kind fates still such days remake :

The magic spell no fate dare break.

Then rest we here, while on the earth,
Through thickening summer dusk look forth
The stars, our hearts too full for mirth.

HE.

Ah, might we stay—forever so ;

As in some dim Arabian tale,
Would time forever onward flow,

And leave us this musk-scented vale ;

Let stars and planets ever sail

Through strange sky-spaces, out of thought,
Here, at this roadside, heeding naught
But love's new life, how rich our lot !

SHE.

A sadness in thy voice doth blend
With the soft-brooding, murmuring night,
That hints e'en true love may have end ;
 Ah, never spreads he wings for flight :
 He ever lives in his own right,
And smiles at death that fain would slay ;
Death's earnest is for him but play,
He heeds nor corse nor sodden clay.

HE.

So hopes my own heart, heart of mine.
 Yet, down the ages of our earth,
Behold a never-ending line
 Of shadow lovers spring to birth ;
 Such men and maids of noble worth,
Such falcon eyes, such cheeks of rose,
Such fears, fulfilments, passion-throes—
And now o'er all Time's portals close.

ON READING THE RUBĀIYĀT OF OMAR
KHAYYĀM.

I.

My Omar, treading in a later day
This devious maze where once your footsteps lay,
Though far from Persia's rich and fragrant Rose,
Far from her clinging Vine's luxuriant spray ;

II.

Treading the path forever new yet old :
The tale retelling now so oft retold ;
Here, while the Night her dusky mantle spreads,
I sit and watch the starry map outroll'd.

III.

So long ago you sang the Rose and Vine.
The Queen of Flowers and the purple wine :
And toss'd your song unto the Sufis forth,
And challeng'd better wisdom than was thine.

IV.

And now a dreamer in a distant clime—
A bubble borne upon the after-time,
Seeing a Rose upon the current float,
Drifts idly on—to touch your orient rhyme.

V.

To touch your rhyme ! but Omar where art thou ?
Dost hear thy life-song wafted to me now ?
This spirit thrilling mine from the white page
Seems like a Presence bending o'er my brow.

VI.

Feeling thy life intense I cannot think
That when the 'Angel of the darker drink.'
At last before thee standing, held the cup,
Thou didst forever into darkness sink.

VII.

Then doubting do I ask, What profits all
The going, coming, on this fire-blown ball?
This sand-speck circling in the dim inane
Where myriad suns forever rise and fall?

VIII.

Mankind, O Omar, still no star can see,
Nor torch to guide them through the Mystery,
Where, blindly groping, cling they to a hope
One day to find of Human Fate the key.

IX.

New Teachers rising to the people cry :
Divinely hither, sent by the Most High,
We come to show the inmost truth of things,—
The truth which shown no scoffer can deny.

X.

His will they know : His purposes make plain ;
Thy Vine and Rose they gird at might and main ;
O'er thorns and stones they press the earthly way
To shun a future of eternal pain.

XI.

Somewhere, they say, within the waste abyss,
There reigns a Paradise of perfect bliss ;

A Land of Summer where the Rose and Vine
Bloom fairer than they ever did in this.

XII.

And they who lov'd not this life there shall tell,
Couch'd high on beds of rose and asphodel,
The praises of His name who led them up
And thrust their brothers down to deepest Hell.

XIII.

Others advancing cry : There is no God !
Or, if there be, philosopher and clod,
Sinner and saint are all alike to him ;
He sits withdrawn—ye need not fear his nod.

XIV.

O brave as strong ! my Omar, kind and wise !
Scorner of sophists and their subtle lies !
Lover of Truth—of Truth without disguise,
And soul's integrity—the highest prize !

XV.

With thee I hold He plac'd us here to live—
To love the life He found it good to give ;
And though the SECRET we should never know,
Why life at worst is sweet—and wherefore grieve ?

XVI.

Lo ! in the East the light of morning grows ;
The curling mists ascend, the crimson glows ;
And, in the smile of greeting Earth and Heav'n,
The Universe appears an op'ning Rose !

GREATNESS.

What most men hunger for yet none achieves,
Save him who greatly cares not to be great,
Who knows the loom of time spins not more state
Than that small filament a spider weaves :
Since single barley-straws make piled-up sheaves,
And atoms diminute the gross earth's weight,
Nor comes from Sirius, earthward, rarer freight
Than this small taper-beam my page receives.

No greater is the desert than one sand,
The mountain than one dust-speck at its base,
The ocean than one rain-drop on my hand :
And Shakspeare's self, there in the foremost place,
Hath but in ampler measure at command
That thought which shines from rustic Hodge's face.

GAMALIEL SINGS.

O to carve the jewelled ring that shines upon her finger.
O to build the marble porch wherein her footsteps linger.
O to shape the leafy arch that intertwines above her.
O to be her bounden slave, true devotee and lover.

And yet, my mistress (ah so fair !)
She doth not wait in porches ;
Nor moves she through dim galleries,
Nor lingers late in churches ;
Nor rests she 'neath the leafy roof.
Vine-wreathed in summer weather :
Nor lonely walks, pale-phantom-proof,
O'er moon-bright leagues of heather.

O to fashion some one thing, my very own, to give her :
To paint a castle, or to build one, near a pleasant river :
To plan a road, erect a bridge, her carriage might pass
over ;
To be her faithful servitor, true devotee and lover.

And yet I know she would not smile
Though I proved ne'er so skilful.
Nor is there any tender wile
To woo my lady wilful.
Though I did yield my life for her
No word of sweet concession
Should pass her lips, no kind demur
Against such rash transgression.

If I should cull a posy rare and on her threshold fling it ;
If I should fashion one sweet song and at her lattice
 sing it ;
If I should weave a canopy her royal brow to cover ;
She might reward her faithful slave, true devotee and
 lover.

But no—her eyes are far away.
 In dreams she looketh onward ;
Nor sees the lovers fain who stray
 Beneath, her glance is sunward.
Beyond the city's towers looks she,
 Beyond the mountain's summit.
And sees afar the knight care-free,
 Who comes yet never cometh.

THE NIGHT IS HERE, MY LOVE.

The night is here, my love,
The jewelled night ;
'Mid trees the glow-worms move,
Soft sparks of light.

Upon the infinite sea
Strange languors sail ;
An odorous mystery
Wraps hill and vale.

While mountain-shadows meet
The spreading lea—
Ah ! were I at thy feet,
Thy smile on me !

This dusky-golden night
Should whisper low
The secret strange and bright
The ages know.

THE FIELD ELM.

Beneath this tree what pleasures have I known,
The while its leaves toyed with the summer breeze,
Sweet odors bearing from the orchard trees,
That show their tops above yon wall of stone.
Here through the long hours have I mused alone,
In day-forgetting, dreamful reveries ;
Or, by some poet's potent imag'ries,
Transported to a place and time unknown,
Have with the Moor in fiery passion moved.
And felt the frenzy of his tortured brain ;
Have heard sweet Juliet call to her beloved :
Have speculated with the mystic Dane ;
Or, in the magic *Grecian Urn*, approved
The glamour of Keat's shadow-pictured train.

WHEN LOVE DIES.

All sound is hushed—save my poor heart so sore—

That, like a stricken bird, makes plaintive cry,
May never life be as it was before ?

The unanswering stars shine in the silent sky,
And o'er the calm face of the gentle night
Soft bars of cloud float in the clear moonlight.

What did he say ? O surely I must die !

Surely he did not say it ! let me rest.
Here at the window leaning, while I try

To ease my heart, with this new woe oppress,
Could I but think—but no, my whirling brain
Has only power to quicken my heart's pain.

• He loves me now not as he used to love,

The old-time spell with time has passed away,
The old-time tenderness time cannot move ;

My friend he will be, if my friend he may :
But since the glory of bright love is flown,
Each life, 'twere best, should journey on alone.'

And when he saw the wonder in my eyes,

Saw life stand listening the approach of fate,
And dark grief, treading on amazed surprise,

Make greedy seizure of sweet joy's estate,
His voice sank trembling, and, so trembling, died,
And then he walked in silence at my side.

But soon he spoke again, with pitying look,

Deep sorrow in his tone and sad despair :

‘Not mine alone the loss if love forsook
 The heart still yearning for his presence fair.
 Since once, but once, the soul with love might burn,
 Grown cold, alas ! delight could ne’er return.’

‘And so the pain was his in equal share,
 Now joy had vanished and sweet hope lay dead.’
 O breaking heart, uphold thy weight of care !
 O darkened earth, whence light and love have fled !
 His pain ! his loss ! O come, my love, again !
 And, lost in love, forget all loss and pain !

Perchance I sleep, and ’tis some horrid dream,
 From which I shall awake to dawning bliss.
 The night’s grey hours with gaunt illusions teem,
 I need but stir to find the proof of this :
 Ah, now I wake ! why see the book we read,—
 And here the passage that my lover said.

And there his pictured eyes do smile on me,
 Radiant with happiness and tender love ;
 Bright, gracious image, where sincerity
 Lights from the soul within the brow above.
 And see ! my ring, he gave me, shining pure
 As truth, and bright as faith that will endure !

Ah God, I weaken ! Wherefore did he come
 Scattering these poison-flowers on my way,
 Clouding the splendor of life’s sunny dome
 While youth shone brightly as a summer day ?
 O dim eyes, brimming with these bitter tears !
 O lonely heart ! O vacant, desolate years !

POESY.

But now, a moment since, she passed me by,

So beautiful ! O calm thyself, my soul.

Her smile was given in pity, as a dole
Unto a beggar, not to crown thine eye

With recognition of thy heart's outcry

To be led upward to the starry goal.

Poor panting trembler, strive then to control
Thine anguish and thy longing, lest thou die.

What though her glance, more radiant than the morn,

More beauty hath than all the earth beside,

To die were better than receive her scorn.

And, scorned by her, thou surely would'st have died.

Poor wilful fool ! then live and die forlorn,

Since die thou wilt or reach unto her side.

TO THE SOUL.

Delicate spirit !
Most dainty essence, now quickening into thought.
Nimblest of coursers, that outspeedest the lightning.
Nearer than wife or child, nearer than father or friend.
Forest pool, that mirrorest the azure.
Divinity's ambassador.—
Ah, what art thou ? what is thy destiny ?

Shall there be a day of parting for us ?
Do we appear for a moment but to darken into nothing-
ness ?
Through thee wife, child and friend ;
Through thee the thought of God ;
Through thee the solid earth, the sun, the stars ;
Through thee winter's diamond morns, summer's dusk
and dew ;
Through thee love, passionate love ;
Love that cannot accept death,
Love that surrenders all,
Love that looks not before nor after, but is its own
universe and life,
Love the unexpressed, the ineffable.
Through thee, O soul, joys and sorrows, mountings and
depressions, darkness of graves, starry flights to the
infinite.
Through thee youth ;
Through thee the secrets of friendship ;
Through thee tragedies, disasters and defeat :

Through thee men and women—the ever-strange yet
familiar faces ;
Through thee poets and heroes.—
Ah, soul, what of thee ?

Thou canst not answer.

Yet meseems thou liftest with swift hand the mighty
curtain, so slightly, ah, so slightly, and beneath
shines a white glimmer. instantaneous, yet promis-
ing all I ask.

Little friend ! Surely no will-o'-the-wisp art thou.
Hast thou nor father nor protector ?—the foster-child of
time, the orphan of the ages, eternity's dim ghost.

Art thou wind—water—a musical note—an unechoing
cry—an ocean-bubble—a dying taper—the gasp of
the drowning ?

Or art thou power, enchantment, triumph, success ?

Shalt thou be forever justified ?

Shall we indeed ascend the stars ?

Shall our yearnings be fulfilled ?

Shall we have all knowledge, all good, all truth ?

Shall we extend the hand of fellowship to enemies ?

See the abysses illumined, the labyrinths open their
folds ?

Follow the intricate net-work ?

Behold the misunderstandings of time grow clear in thy
light ?

Ah soul, shall we finally disappear or press on forever ?

TO W. S.

I.

What helps it that I love thee ? that my heart,
Like some poor suitor, seen amid the throng
That moves about a princess, where sweet song,
Light dance and music, blend with ready art
To blot him from her thought, from any part
In all that to her soul's sweet needs belong,
Must sadly stand thy worshippers among,
Or silently upon my way depart?
Unknowing thee, and never to be known.
My love, my tender homage, quite in vain :
Since these can lead no nearer to thy throne.
Nor find a voice to call through ranks of men
And place me at thy side, where, all alone,
Thou might'st give love for love, till joy grew pain.

II.

But thou art all, and I, alas, am naught :
Thou the full sun, poor I the darkened sphere ;
Or, if I glimmer in my gloomful year,
'Tis with a splendour from thy radiance caught.
A wistful planet, still unseen, unsought.
I roll, nor ever come light's fountain near.
So fair and far, yet to my soul so dear.
I know thou would'st not scorn my meaner lot.
But would'st thou love me ? could'st thou love me, say ?
I, who have given thee worship, ask but love ;
If I should meet thee on some distant day
And shew my heart, would'st thou my trust reprove ?
Or sourly pass, without or yea or nay ?
Ah no, great spirit, thou would'st gentle prove.

ON THE TERRACE.

We talk of Thoreau, Emerson,
Find Browning 'subtle,' Keat's divine,
Suspect the morrow may be fine,
'Tis time the summer were begun :
We had been laughing, chatting free—
Where can that pleasant freedom be ?

Constraint comes o'er us as we sit
And hear the river foam below :
Above, the sky, with pearly glow
Of moon-soft mist, is over-lit—
That velvet-marble cloud afar
Is centre-pierced by one bright star.

The night is lovely, like a bride
That goes to meet her lord, the sun.
I wonder if she may be won,
This silent maiden at my side—
A princess sure, by right divine,
Of royal grace in Beauty's line.

Meantime she sits with flower-sweet face.
A lily proud-poised on its stem,
And calm as any carven gem
Expressionless, that shews no trace,
That has no sense, of human pain.
Nor ever felt Love's silken chain.

While I, bound fast, with throbbing breast,
Where fear and hope alternate come,
Essay to speak, but stricken dumb,
Leave all my longing unconfest.
So cold she seems, so bright, so fair,
Faint hope gives place to chill despair.

Then love, again my bosom's lord,
Expels each craven hope and fear ;
For thee, he cries the hour is here—
Love's hour, the time, the scene afford ;
For thee these gracious stars now shine.
I turn, and my love's eyes meet mine.

.

O, Love did never yet break faith !
Trust Love, he speaks no idle words :
Though sweet as song of morning birds,
As true as prophet's holy breath.
Trust Love, for Love kept faith with me ;
He surely will keep faith with thee.

FANCY.

‘ Ever let the fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.”

Nay—when Fancy is at home
All bright shapes of beauty come !
Soft she waves her shining wand :
Fairy lights gleam o’er the land.
All the treasures of the main,
All the wild-flowers of the plain,
All the stars that gem the air
When swart Night is thronéd there.
All the wonders that the sun
In his course doth look upon—
These appear at her command
When she waves her shining wand.

And when Fancy is from home
No kind shapes of beauty come.
Bleak the sky and chill the air,
Doleful glooms sit everywhere.
Dun clouds veil the rich sky’s blue.
Not one golden ray glints through.
Then ascends her dusky throne,
Death’s half-sister, hideous crone,
Care, a hag well-known to men,
Issuing from her noisome den.
Yellow, wrinkled, baleful, sly ;
Hate gleams from her bloodshot eye.

Summons she her imps perverse,
Bids each one his task rehearse :
Where a blessing was, a curse,
Where a better seemed, a worse,
Bear they to unhappy men
From Care's foul and murky den.
Where, when Fancy was at home,
Happy winds were fain to roam.
Loathsome vapors now have sway,
Poisoning the sweet light of day.
Where dew-spangled fields were seen,
Gay with suit of hopeful green,
Sandy tracts of desert lie,
Hateful to the weary eye.
Where a flower its sunny head
Reared, a weed doth spring instead.
Where a star of promise show'd,
Dark despair hath his abode
Thus, when Fancy is from home,
All dread shapes and phantoms come.

Goddess Fancy ! Maiden free !
Spread thy choicest gifts for me.
Wilt thou love me ? Wilt be kind ?
Make thy home within my mind.
A true worshipper of thine
Kneels then ever at thy shrine.

THE EARTH-SPIRIT.

In sun-bright raiment, in the spring,
 When buds were full and brooks were free,
 And violets brake o'er the lea,
And song-birds 'gan their carolling,
I saw her, poised on silver wing,
 Above a vivid beechen tree :
 Beneath two lovers laughed in glee,
And sang to hear the thrushes sing.

Again I passed her where she stood,
 With drooping head and saddened mien,
Beside a grave. The dim, gray wood
 Was leafless now. The mead, so green
Erewhile, was dun. Sighing, she view'd
 The mound, and wept for what had been.

FATHER AND SON.

Yes, as you say, 'tis pleasant to have done—
To have achieved, won fame, distinction, love,
Whate'er it be men render unto him
Who unto them has given pleasure, power,
Pomp, profit, some new interest in life,
Which, whatsoe'er we say, would still grow stale,
But for the new-creator.

Now to me

It almost is as if the deed were mine—
And yet not quite, not quite. How strange it seems
That fires, which all my life have smouldered low,
Dark, but for fitful flames, should now in you
Burst forth with dazzling glow, a sun new-risen.
Indeed, it dazzles me this new-found fame,
So near me, yet not mine. 'Tis yours at least ;
And fate, that much denied, rewards in part.
'Tis a great picture and deserved success,
And faithfully you labored, buoyed by hope.
This slope is shady, though there are no trees ;
For see, the day, though but three-quarters gone,
Has left this side o' the hill, and a cool breath
Comes from the lazy river at its base.
'Tis pleasant here ; so think those lads below,
Splashing and shouting as they sink and rise.
Another picture there : just jot it down
Upon your mental canvas : call it then
THE BATHERS, you will have a second triumph.

That level stretch of grass, the sun-warm rocks,
The light and shade, the rippling poplar line,
The glistening windows on the further bank,
The moving cattle and those peasants there,
(We'll call them peasants) with the shallow stream
And pretty naked figures of the boys,
Should make a goodly picture; though I own
It lacks the human passions you demand.
The deaths of kings and moving acts of heroes.
Yet, what a sky the sun trails after him!
What grandeur and what glory here attend
A single day's outgoing!

Happiness?

A wise and tranquil life, upright and true.
O, I have few regrets—'tis almost lived.
Yet, when I was your age, my heart beat high;
Ambition knew no bounds. I'd not have ta'en
A prince's ransom for my grand career.
And then, how commonplace! to win by chance
Well-nigh a prince's ransom—to have done
All but the thing one's heart was set upon.
What else is failure? Ah, what else—who knows?
Thus was it ever with me. Did I dream
Some purpose to accomplish, I sat down
To weigh the pros and cons, the difficulties.
And then these seemed to tower, and then it seemed
Mere folly and presumption to have dreamed.
Yet I saw pictures, then, heroic ones.
Though unlike you, who are content to paint,
I longed to live them. Know you which is best?
You smile, of course,—the idealist's fine smile.
For you the mental drama far exceeds

The actual : worlds, for you, are lost and won
More perfectly remote from clash and din.
Your mother's touch o' the artist in your blood.
Ah, had she lived, haply I might have done
In the rich real what you in phantom wise.
Advice you scarcely need, but listen, boy.
You know your dream—go on and have no fear ;
Should doubts beset you, smile them into air ;
Though mountain-shapes they take, they are but clouds,
Mere vapory masses moving in your sky.
Kindle your soul to sun-fire—they are gone !
This is the poor result of many a life,
To know one might have been a conqueror,
The bay-crowned king and victor over time,
Had he but dared and done. Then never swerve.
If failures come, make of them the strong base
Whereon to raise your palace.

Lights and shades
Have gone from sky and plain : the blue is grey—
I trust you have the picture. Let us go.

LIFE.

To stretch warm dimpled hands to moon and sun,
To roam by field and hill and wood and stream,
To see the long days pass as in a dream,
To feel love's fires along life's pulses run ;
And then, life's chief prize gained, its glory won,
What follows must perforce be glad we deem :
But fate sends cloud as well as sunny beam,
And glooms the golden web wit^h grey and dun.

Oppressed by seeming chance-sent ills we turn
Sad eyes of wonder to the smiling heaven :
Best bliss denied, all meaner joys we spurn,
And taunt performance with youth's promise given :
Till, chilled by time, at last we cease to yearn,
And trust death yields the hope here from us riven.

ALTHEA.

I.

Now I meet you : see I greet you,
Hands held high ;
Trip we airily, trip we merrily,
Moments fly.

II.

Moments fly, ah, must we die ?
I and thou, love ? Why then now, love,
Dance more merrily.

III.

All of life, love, goes with strife, love ;
Tears and yearning, woes returning,
Ceaseless care and pain.

This one night, love, holds delight, love,
Hands held up now, pleasure's cup now,
Joyously we drain.

IV.

Perfect is the moment, swift on music's tide,
Softest motion swelling o'er the billows wide,
Souls now float alone and now are wafted side to side.
Ah, sweet the mystic currents that so perfectly can guide.

V.

In thine eyes I see
Love holds court :

A true tyrant he
Saith report.

Yet so fair he seems
There enshrined,
Erringly one deems
Love is kind :

And would fain believe
In those eyes
Naught that dwells could grieve :
How be wise ?

VI.

You smile, and the lord of love
Half turns a rose-red cheek ;
You smile, and the heaven of love
Seems mine with a word to speak.

VII.

Bear me afar, O tide,
Bear me unto her side :
I climb thy waves of bliss
That break upon a kiss
Or toss me to yon ocean grey and wide.

VIII.

My heart is a crystal well ;
Far down I gaze and see
One weaving a magic spell
Wherewith to dazzle me.

My heart is a silver brook
That shews the sky above :

And while I listen and look
It sings of love, of love.

My heart is a stormy sea,
With darkness and no star,
And drifts there (woe is me !)
A corpse tied to a spar.

IX.

But away ! we meet and mingle,
Life runs high and life is love ;
Dance we double, dance we single,
While the hot blood thus can tingle,
Ghosts of dead loves cannot move.

X.

Higher ! still higher !
My soul is a fire,
Thus should we march to death,
Thus render up our breath ;
Joy hath found us,
Love hath crowned us,
Life spoke his shibboleth.

XI.

Ah, that I might weep
For thee,
And that thou could'st weep
For me.

XII.

I know where they bury the dead—
The married and those unwed.

Grey heads and brown there lie :
 Ah, could we, too, but die.

XIII.

Die? Never!
 I love thee ever.
 I kiss thy lips
 As the brown bee sips :
 And never again
 Shall care or pain,
 Black woes that sever,
 Dispart us twain.

A REMINISCENCE.

Before me spreads a wide, neglected field,
 With moonshine flooded from a sapphire sky :
 The village school, some straggling houses nigh :
 And, at a pathway's ending, half concealed
 By deep tree-shadows from the moon's bright shield.
 Two boys lounge, careless how the moments fly—
 The silver-footed moments—while they ply
 Light wings of airy talk, friends close annealed.

An hour runs on : the changing shadows show
 The boys' clear faces lit with youth and hope,
 With earnest-hearted friendship's overflow,
 And vision'd outlook on the future's scope—
 The large, kind future, of sweet mysteries,
 Successes high and golden histories.

TO THE QUEEN-MOON.

"And haply the queen moon is on her throne."

I.

Pale mistress of the azure-palaced night,
An l of men's thoughts that now do turn to thee,
As, gliding fair into the cloud-dimmed height
Of thy great glory, sailing heaven's sea,
In robes imperial thou dost sit withdrawn,
Against thy face's circlet, silver-clear,
An inner softness shining, pure as lawn,
While richer folds of raiment still appear
Above it—sapphire, rose and emerald dyes,
Clothing thy sovranly in precious state,
O queen serene and fair !
Till, brought to pause, I marvel if mine eyes
Joy more to see thee thus, or, as of late,
Divine in the blue air.

II.

Divine in the blue air thou wast erewhile,
But now in rainbow splendor art retired :
Veiled the effulgence of thy brightest smile,
E'en to thy worshippers, yet, passion-fired,
Still at thy vestments' beauty they admire,
And dream of days when life and love were young,
When through the forest-ways thou did'st not tire
To wander, and as heaven-born wast sung
By dark-eyed maidens, singing under trees.

Or crossing glades, embroidered with thy beam
 Upon the velvet sward.
 But now no more, in woodland or by leas
 Flower-scented, sing they of thee, and a d:eam
 Alone is left the bard.

III.

No more on earth among the forest trees,
 Nor where the streamlet's music ripples clear
 Along its pebbly shallows, nor by seas
 White-beachéd, where the flying nereids hear
 The playful trump of a young triton's horn,
 May'st thou by any chance be heard or seen
 Chasing the deer, while yet the dewy morn,
 With cool smile mantles o'er the leafy green :
 No, stripped of deity, thou now art shewn
 A lifeless borrower of reflected light
 From the proud-dazzling sun ,
 Illusion past, thy bright romance all flown,
 A weary traveller through the realm of night,
 With service to be done,

IV.

Illusion past, attendant on our earth,
 Appendage of a planet thou art seen ;
 Yet thine are still the hours of sweetest mirth,
 And Love himself doth hold thy ray serene
 For his soft votaries fitter far than day,
 Whose fervent glance the young loves ever flee ;
 And oft, in Southern gardens far away,
 Wave-washed forever by the Midland sea,
 And where vine-yarded France's arbors sleep,
 And England's grassy lanes and meadows lie,

TO THE QUEEN-MOON.

Bathed in thy tender light,
Thou see'st the youths and maidens trysting keep,
And merry gatherings dance the moments by,
Oblivious of their flight.

V.

Even as sweet poesy is thy soft spell,
Bright wonder-worker of the silver sphere,
Who weavest magic over stream and dell,
O'er field and grove and solitary mere :
And Poesy's sweet spell is like to thine,
In that the sacred power she doth possess
To flood our common life with light divine
Till earth is hallowed in its loveliness,
Seems all a glamouring unreality
When in the mind blithe Fancy droops her wing
For the thick stagnant air—
Yet charm of poesy and thine may be
As gleams from lands where brighter spirits sing
'Neath skies forever fair.

ON A PORTRAIT OF MILTON.

If strength and beauty ever in one face
Were fitly wedded in fair harmony
Of form and spirit, high, self-poised and free,
Behold their union : this their dwelling-place.
Here shines the unconquered soul, and here the grace
Ineffable that Greece rose from the sea
To teach men rioting in war's fierce glee—
The radiant consummation of her race.

Austere in mind, he heard the muses sing ;
Joy's suitor, duty called him not in vain ;
A puritan, he fled on fancy's wing
To pleasure, where in pleasure was no stain :
For conscience' sake his life an offering,
He at the last drew splendor from sad pain.

LOVE AND DEATH.

Take me to thee, O my love !
Fold me in thine arms !
Side by side, then, we shall prove
Death and his alarms.

Thou, who wast my light in life,
Be my life in death.
Hush we here the petty strife
For a little breath.

Now I go into the gloom,
Where thou, Sweet, art gone :
Brought together by a tomb,
We shall greet anon.

See I rest me at thy side,
Cheek against thy cheek ;
Such a little is denied—
That thou should'st but speak.

Filled am I with nameless woe
Though I touch thy hand :
Can this, then, be overthrow
Cruel fate hath planned ?

Everlasting night shall press
On our lids and lips,
But can love be any less —
Suffer dull eclipse ?

Love hath led us to thy feet,
Prithee, Death, be kind.
Light was in his presence sweet,
Darkness here we find.

Trusting him, we now trust thee.
See our piteous case—
'Neath thy dusky portals we
Take our last embrace.

ACROSTIC.

Maiden with the rose-red cheek and the deep blue eye,
And all sweet soul-sympathies, rose-red, too, in hue ;
Throbbing heart, love-trembling, like stars in summer
sky,
Thinking brain, swift-flashing, like sunlight on the
dew.
Yon gold sun the symbol is of thy nature's dower,
Yon bright day the soul love-won by thee from night's
dark power.

DUSK SUMMER EVES SHALL COME AND GO.

Dusk summer eves shall come and go :
Ripe moons shall wane, rich roses blow :
 Youth's wizard spell shall still make sweet
 The paths for lovers' wanderings meet
Of earth, where thou and I met so.

Sweet Earth where sunshine follows rain,
Sweet Life where pleasure walks with pain.
 Sweet Love, the purple-robed and gay,
 That met us on the flowery way
Of earth, when so to meet was gain.

Life came with riches manifold,
With treasures more than gems or gold ;
 And happy Art, with Love made brave
 And dear the offerings that Life gave,
Till joy was ours a thousandfold.

Life, Love and Art shall pass away :
The earth, with all its wondrous play
 Of light and shade, shall one day pass,
 Like figures in a magic glass :
But we—shall we not meet one day ?

LOVE AND THOUGHT.

With silver speech, clear brow and eyes of light.
Came Thought, and clasped my hand and led me on
Into the darkness ; where, when we had gone
With flying feet far down the lonely night,
Ere yet his beacon turrets rose in sight,
E'en while their distant cressets dimly shone,
A sudden terror fell my heart upon
That Love, my master Love, was slain outright.

Our onward course we held until the grey
Of morning glimmered on the clouds above :
The high, wide portals passed, he led the way.
And then, as 'twere the rustling of a dove,
A low, cool laugh—and, in bright rose of day,
There, at my right hand, smiling—there was Love !

THE PARLIAMENT OF MAN.

The noise of a multitude in the mountains, as it were of many people, the noise of the sound of kings, of nations gathered together."

I.

What shall withstand her? who shall gainsay her?

The mighty nation!

Nation of freemen with hearts linked together.

None to betray her.

When from the strong soul leaps forth indignation.

How shall the wrong live? how should the false thrive?

How prosper liars?

Down with dissemblers, far hence be each dastard,

Hence all deniers!

II.

Chaunt the great nation with hands locked together.

North, South, East, West, one bond binds the true-
hearted.

Each one for the nation and the nation for each one.

Where the millions are one fears no one of the millions.

See the monster, Behemoth, stride from ocean to ocean.

From the pole to equator, from the pole to the pole.

Did he slumber—you dreamed?—lo! a single man's
wronged there.

And the turbulent crowds raise a cry smites the welkin:

As one pulse beat the millions swift help to the wronged
one.

And the wronger slinks back. Justice now hath a
pleader.

Stem the steep waves of ocean when Boreas hath stirred
them.

Quell the riotous billows when tempest doth lash them.

O the free waves of ocean, how resistless their forces !

O each man of the millions a light-crested fighter !

O the millions oceanic with souls linked together !

O the surging, triumphant, troth-plighted, united—

The many in one, the sure tie forged by freedom.

III.

How sing fit praise ? how raise the psalm ?

Say ye who love her.

How of true hearts breathe the single devotion—

A song empyrean ?

Mingle a voice from strong souls the land over,

Voices of maidens, wives, husbands and lovers,

A voice from the sea —

Chaunting deep faith in the nation of freemen !

Forever to be !

A WINTER NIGHT.

Azure and silver, with soft points of gold.

Far-scattered o'er a clear blue dome of night

Beneath the moon the shining earth is bright.

And glistens mail-clad ; from across the wold

The wind blows keenly ; the stark trees are cold.

And silently, with nimble fingers light,

The genii of the frost diffuse his might.

And subtly all his magic spells unfold.

Azure and silver : As before a shrine

In some great temple all is hushed and still.

The streams flow noiselessly ; an incense fume.

The storm-king's breathing, floats o'er vale and hill.

The sharp free winds intoxicate like wine,

And life's high pulses with fresh joyance fill.

FANTASY.

Lo ! the sky is hung with banners.

Scarlet crimson, rose and gold,

And the heavenly spearmen, mounting,

Crowd in legions, thick, past counting,

Swiftly o'er a dim, grey wold.

In the sunset clouds a tumult.

Persian wars and battles strange :

Glories of the orient streaming,

Brazen shields and helmets gleaming.

Movement, onset, violence, change.

A LETTER.

The mirror's cracked, I grant, yet in it once

Your friend appears, if more or less untruly :
And, should its partial candor glass a dunce,

You are not one to praise or blame unduly.
You ask me who my friends are : be it known

That, save yourself and one—I think one other—
I have no friends ; I journey on alone :

My brothers all men are, and I their brother—
That is, you know, I love them at a distance,
And they love me, though with no great insistence.

I love them and I hate. I love them for

That which they are, and more for what they will be ;
For what they are I hate them and still more

For what they have been, and alas ! must still be,
And yet my hate is weak, my love is strong.

For in my breast now glows a warmer feeling,
That gives 'I hate' the lie, and swears a wrong

My head my heart does in this self-revealing,
My friend ! my friend ! I love men with a passion
That burns, though in no philanthropic fashion.

I said I had no friends, nor have I one

In that strange crew the world calls *good* society :
The self-styled fair and brave. No church I own :

No church owns me, no sect of strait sobriety.
Nor do I lean to any learned school,

Of philosophic wisdom the monopolist :

I must be free, even if to play the fool.

I need not say I am no bibliophilist :

A lost sheep am I, unredeemed, given over :

Yet envy not those sleek ones, deep in clover.

Love keeps the key to hearts : and true love may

Win entrance even unto the courts of heaven.

Love is the peer of thought, the master, say :

Who loves, to him life's treasures shall be given.

Humility may soar to stellar heights,

With calm, unflinching gaze may front the morning,

Or in the mid-day dazzle wheel his flights,

Hate, pride and fear unfelt, or lightly scorning,

And what ambition's eager angels never

May find, love's fools may win and keep forever.

Seen thus, I have some friends—a glorious few !

One, two, three, four—I count them on my fingers :

Old friends they are, dear friends, yet always new :

About their memory fond affection lingers.

They are not known to good society—

Outcasts indeed, free-livers, atheists, sinners—

Such brands they bore or bear, yet it may be

That in Time's last acclaim they shall be winners :

Though ostracized by pious jesters quaintly,

With noses heavenward tipped and aspect saintly.

First Whitman comes, a titan among men.

The Philistines he smote, and smites full roundly

On hip and thigh : his strength as that of ten.

An eagle's sight, a heart that feels profoundly

No parlor-poet, for a poet he,

America's first-born and chiefest singer :

The hope of earth, the child Democracy,

Leaps in his arms ; he to our hearts would bring her.
 (Ah, new-world poets ! be ye brave and tender !
 Your ward she is—protect her and defend her !)

A spirit winged—swift birth of dew and fire :

A lyric thought, a flame, a rapture burning ;
 A prison'd soul, new-thrilled with life's desire ;
 All tears, all smiles, despairs and eager yearning,
 See Shelley come ! fair as the morning star.

When from the threshold of his palace golden,
 The day looks forth, and men awakened are
 To hopes and fears, new cares and joys grown olden.
 What dazzling shafts ! what rout ! what sharp undoing !
 What panic hosts—love's legions bright pursuing !

The world's a stage. And this the play-house door :

We enter ; find our seats ; up goes the curtain.
 Illusion tucks us 'neath her wing—no more
 Mere citizens of time ; of space uncertain :
 The crimson stream runs riot : on its tide
 Move kings and queens, high nobles, warriors, seamen ;
 Cordelia, Juliet, Lear, and she who died
 For Antony ; swains, rustics, clowns and gleemen.
 Some more benignant Jove is this they follow ?
 Or him that led the nine—far-famed Apollo ?

'Tis Prosper's self : in purple robed and gold :

Arch-wizard, minstrel-chief, most high musician ;
 Who saw the mystic passion-flower unfold,
 Man's heart, God's secret ; and with crystal vision
 Beheld the wonderful dead ages rise :
 The lust, the sin, the shame, the pomp, the splendor.

Heroic deeds, crimes, torments ; agonies
 Of losing souls, in each day's sad surrender :
 The wisest, wittiest, gentlest, sweetest spirit
 That ever Thought's high kingdom did inherit.

Life is a puzzle wondrous : for these three
 And one or more, whose names I need not mention,
 To whom our love and homage, full and free,
 Go forth, have sown below here strange dissension.
 A vulgar playwright one, and one quite ' mad,'
 And one a ' beast ' still is, with leanings bestial,
 Even at this day. The very best was bad,
 The prim opine. No place in the celestial
 Abodes of heaven or earth can they discover
 For men who lived for truth, and dared to love her.

And now to close. I'll own a prejudice,
 A fault that leans to virtue's side, one only !
 I swear but one ! and pity 'twere to miss
 The human weakness, where so slight and lonely !
 'Tis this, I can't be fair to the *élite*,
 The social flower, the cream, the aristocracy ;
 Whenever their opposing interests meet,
 Or right or wrong, I stand for the democracy.
 A fault, said I ? Ah, here my heart's unruly !
 'Tis my best virtue !

As of old,

Yours truly.

MIDSUMMER.

A garden-world of leafy avenues,
A moonlit sea of swaying branches green.
Uprising scents of flowers and falling dews,
Dusk shadow-spaces, silver isles between :
And over all the magic of the time,
The breathing spell of love and love's sweet hours :
The shimmer there of robes, and hark ! the chime
Of happy laughter, as from hidden bowers.
Now all the sad earth seems one paradise.
An eden new-redeemed of lovely souls.
Where, if the sunlight glance or the moon rise,
Toward fair perfection a bright planet rolls.
All vanished now the woes of yesterday—
Would that to-morrow's were as far away.

FLOWERS THAT BLOOM AND DIE.

Flowers that bloom and die
Lend me of your beauty
While I sing her praises,
Praise is lovers' duty :
Violets and daisies
Now my need supply.

Lilies too and roses,
Sunshine's birth and shadow's,
Find me fit expressions ;
Wild flowers of the meadows,
Garden-crofts and closes,
Send me sweet suggestions.

Flowers, your art doth fail :
Breezes ye are fragrant
Of the field and garden,
Yet your fancies vagrant
Smilingly I pardon ;
Winds faint, hues grow pale.

To my heart she seems
(Be it known I love her)
Fairer than all flowers
That the fields do cover
When, 'mid fostering showers,
June's bright largess teems.

Sweeter is her breath
Than the violet scented
Or the rose's breathing;
I might lie contented,
Me her arms enwreathing;
E'en with grisly death.

For her kiss I'd give,
Were her kiss denied me,
Life and all its treasure;
With my love beside me
Joy can find no measure,
Heaven it is to live.

Time holds naught more sweet,
Lest it be renewal
Of such happy meetings;
In these blisses dual,
In these dainty greetings,
Lives are made complete.

NIGHT.

An earth-throned queen, she leans with languid grace,

And fills the round of vision radiantly.

Soft lights and shades the heaven of her face

Endue with spell-framed hints of mystery.

Her breathing, like the flower-sweet breath of May.

When summer's light wind-heralds run before,
Gives fragrance unto gardens ; while the day,

Enamoured, through his cloud-hung Western door,
Peers backward. On her jewelled vest are seen,

'Mid brodered streams and trees, the homes of men ;
Here jolts a rolling wain through meadows green,

And kine belated wind through yonder glen.
From out her star-inwoven dusk of hair

A silver crescent gleams divinely fair.

ATTIC-MUSINGS.

A mist hangs over the town,
Tip-tap from the rain in the leaves,
Tip-tap the listless drops come down,
The wind glides round the eaves.

A-flutter it strikes the trees,
Commotion mid leaves and drops ;
Like a hive of wondering, startled bees—
Then swift the tumult stops !

And Silence standeth with gentle look
And face serene, as when
A garrulous, chattering, noisy brook
Grows mirror-smooth again.

Without are the rain-tossed leaves ;
Beyond the trees is the town :
Ah, there what wonders destiny weaves,
To see were a poet's crown.

Beyond the mist are the stars :
The stars that crush and smite :
The stars that lift over earthly bars
To the sea of the infinite.

Ah wonder of rain and trees !
Ah wonder of death and life !
Ah wondrous orbéd destinies,
With calm succeeding strife !

A SUNSET.

A perfect artist hath been here : the scene
Is grandly imaged ; with what breadth of hand,
What noble grace of freedom all is planned !
The woods, the water and the lakelet's sheen ;
The magic hues—gold-pink, rose-pearl, sea-green,
And now the Western gateway, see, is spanned !
A nameless glory gilds the favoured land,
And still the spirit-artist works unseen.

Belike upon the chamber of a king
My erring steps have stumbled ; yet meseems,
These, like myself, are common men, who spring
From rock to rock where the mid-splendor gleams.
Perchance the king's sons we, and I, who sing,
Co-heir to wealth beyond yon realm of dreams.

THE MARRIAGE OF TRUE MINDS.

LOVE.

I wandered in the gardens of the king
All in the glory of the purple even.
I heard the nightingales and thrushes sing :
Then came the flush of dawn on peaks of heaven.
And lo ! a wonder with the risen day—
The dream ! the glow ! the transport ! the awaking !
Full summer kept the promise of fair May.
And heaven itself seemed through the azure breaking.
Life spread in rose-lit vistas at my feet—
And She, the Well-Beloved, to walk beside me !
Far off we heard the clashing armies meet.
For freedom and for love ! was aught denied me ?
Mine ! Mine ! My own ! with naught on earth to sever !
One life ! One love ! Forever and forever !

UNION.

As streams in the same vale one day unite,
As neighb'ring trees their hidden roots enwind,
As when with dwelling on a lovely sight
Its fairness tinctures the beholder's mind :
So from true love a mystic union springs,
That with the fleeting years must stronger grow.
Inextricably woven are the strings
Knit by the shuttles swift of joy and woe.
In common hopes and common memories join
The streams. As one the spirit's branching roots
Are intertwined past severance. Rain or shine,
The harvest their's of sweet or bitter fruits.
One Love ! One Life ! May not true marriage mean
One fairer Spirit born to the Unseen ?

JULIAN.

Zenobia.

And he, this dreamer, died, did you not say?
What was his dream?

Philip.

A moonshine fantasy :
The wildest, maddest shuttle-sprite of thought
That ever antics played in human brain
Gave airy form and colour to the web.

Zenobia.

Then pray unfold it. Yonder sapphire sky,
The stars, the roses, this caressing air,
All soothe to summer fancies, happy dreams
Of spicy gales and dim Hesperides.

Philip.

He was a gentle boy, when all is said,
A wanderer to our planet from some star
Where love is law and impulse never errs.
A simpleton some deemed him, some a sage.
Some called him devil, some a seraph bright.
And when he died all marvelled, for had none
To this strange nature found the simple key.
Simplicity it was : his spirit knew
No contradictions. What he thought he said.
What he desired to do, that thing he did.

And in the star I spoke of, whence he strayed,
His native intuition would have seemed
The highest wisdom, but was madness here.
In a mad world the sage the madman is.
A madman Christ to the mad world he came
Some nineteen hundred summers since to save,
And goodness to old wickedness seems still
The erratic fool that needs the scourge and cross.
But to my story. If you can, conceive
A soul so pure, a nature so direct,
A heart so innocent, that sham and cant,
Humbug and compromise, pretence and craft,
And all the thousand sinister small arts
Our social life engenders and requires,
To it were wonders never understood.
Or this may help—the average man to him
Was as the drop of poisoned brandy left
Within the drunkard's glass is to the clear
And shining dew-drop in the lily's cup.
What wonder if our civilization seemed
To such as he a thing of frauds and lies,
Built on the quicksands of hypocrisy,
And doomed to perish.

Zenobia.

See ! a falling star !
I wished for—you'll not guess what was my wish !
It cut a line of light along the blue,
Then vanished like your friend. His line yet lives
In your mind's heaven, just as does in mine
The star that flashed across yon glowing sky,
Though gone from thence forever.

Philip.

Social life,
As we now know it, seemed to him a strife,
A cut-throat game where each man slays his neighbour ;
The name society a woeful paradox.
Our marriages he deemed a mockery,
Where slow routine usurps the place of love
And dull monotony the seat of joy.
That men and women should be bound for life,
One man into one woman, stirred his laughter,
His wrath, his indignation. Did it ask,
He would demand, a lifetime to peruse,
Study and get by heart one human soul ?
Or rather, would not lesser time suffice
For each to learn, appropriate, exhaust
What the other held of beauty, wisdom, love.
Soul-knowledge, said he, is the aim of life,
And should be free as light, as air, as love.
Two men are drawn together : love has birth,
That love which we call friendship : for a time
These twain are all in all, inseparable,
Would ' drink up Esil, eat a crocodile,'
Die for each other, drown, burn, be impaled.
And all for what ?—To mix their essences,
To blend, each giving that which life gave him—
Then go their ways. Some one observes that Dick
Has found another friend ; that Will of late
Is seen with that quaint rogue, young Edward Gray.
You see Will wants Ned's secret, having Dick's,
And Dick, sweet Will exhausted, roams afield.
They like each other still, nod when they meet,
Dream of the dear old days at intervals,
But know that friendships die as dies our youth.

Our manhood, passions, hatreds, life itself,—
And no one censures, no one finds it odd
They should not love forever.

Then how strange,
Thus would he reason, in that other love,
The love of man and woman, that this law,
Condition of all loving, hating, living,
That what begins shall end, that fires burn out,
That not one man or woman is the world,
Should be esteemed a crime. That love should die !
That married love should die ! a crime ! a crime !
The elders shake their heads, too ardent youth,
In love for the first time and not yet out,
Enamored of heroic constancy,
Would spit upon the slave dares whisper it.
(Here would his eye grow light, and tossing back
The sunny locks that, curling, crowned his brow,
His vision seemed to run before and show
A world regenerate, a happy earth,
A golden time ; and thus, as from the height,
Sunlit, of later ages, would he speak.)

' A time there was, far back where now ye dwell.
When life pressed hardly on her favorite man.
Of Nature then he seemed the hated stepson ;
For frost and fire, the water and the air,
His friends and helpers now, were enemies.
All forces barred his way and laid him low.
But swiftly he arose, gave battle fierce,
And match'd with mightiest powers held his own.
While thus employed a strife in his own walls
Arose, and treason reared its coward front,—

With Jealousy and Envy, subtle spies,
The braggart Anger, Lust, the loathly fool,
Unfaith and Hate and Pride, and many more
Seditious spirits as conspirators
And captains in the feud, which, then begun,
Ran on for centuries, till slowly quelled
By Love, the glorious and ne'er-conquered prince.
This change then happed,—the baser elements,
Impurity, suspicion, sour distrust,
Low care and kindred passions, bred of strife,
Disease and crime and all discordant foes,
That once held lives apart, were driven out,
And men and women, with full trust and love,
Clear-souled and beautiful, went to and fro.
Union for life—life-marriage unto such
Would seem a marvel, as if one should say,
Friend, see this chair: if in it thou would'st sit,
Thou may'st not rise again: to turn and look
To compass-points 'tis true may be allowed,
But for thy life thou must not leave the chair.
Ah, here desire is holy, pure and good,
Is Life's fair fountain whence fair life upsprings,
Needs freedom ever, never needs restraint.
Here freely men and women come and go,
And fair affinities each other find.
By minds obscene the flesh is held impure,
Pure minds see in the flesh the living soul.
Less pure is it that bodies meet and mix
In love's embrace than that souls daily blend?
Your married men and women may clasp hands
With others also married, may indeed,
If suitably related, on chaste lips
Impress chaste kisses: Yet this touch of flesh

By the chaste husband is not deemed impure,
Nor do chaste wives perceive the fleshly stain.
Here is the kernel. Where all men are pure
Naught is obscene, and where all men are true
No falsehood is. Disease and care and wrong
From earth expelled, the soul true freedom wins.
True freedom and true love, these hold the soul.
No property should man e'er hold in man,
No property in woman. Each should own
The other as the free air owns the earth,
The earth the winds and streams. And kind regard,
Regard that kindles passion, love that burns
With luminous fire and opens soul to soul,
Shall reign while it shall reign; and thence shall come
Seraphic offspring, children of the flame.
Where hearts are pure, Desire may have his way,
The eyes' desire, the heart's desire, the soul's,
And naught it stay. Abandonment is none,
Is none left loveless. Lovers come and go:
Life's richer that they loved, and their two souls
Retain the other's impress,—she, the rose,
Behold a lily yonder whose gold heart
His heart would look upon, and lo, down comes,
With longing for her perfumed mystery,
He who but now stood at the lily's side.
“ True love in this differs from gold and clay
That to divide is not to take away.
Love is like understanding that grows bright
Gazing on many truths.” And so they part,
With tenderest homage, as the child must leave
The parent, and seek out what life may hold.
One day they shall re-meet and shew their stores,
Their knowledge of the loves and lives of men,

The secrets of whose souls are added to
The secrets of their own, and these, mayhap.
Shall stir new fires of passion, and once more
Shall life burn at its brightest for these twain.
And so forever through dim lives that glide
Into the unknown ages.'

Zenobia.

What strange words.
Mad, as you say, or wise without earth's wisdom.
And yet they breathe of freedom, and have stirred
A strange pulsation in my soul, as when
The mighty forces of the sea are moved.
But at such depth that all stays calm above.
Your friend was good, I have no doubt was good.
And may have died too young. Was he unhappy?
He could not have been happy.

Philip.

No, he could not.
As happiness is gauged he was not happy,
Though he had hours of bliss. Love was his ruin :
It fed the root of his philosophy,
Made up his life, his joy and woe, and led
At last to his undoing.

Zenobia.

To his undoing?

Philip.

That is the saddest part, and you shall hear it.
He loved a lady who was worthy love.
For I have seen her ; good she was and true.

Fair also with a beauty sweet and precious.
He gave her worship ; loved her with a passion
Peculiar to his nature ; as a man
Might love a goddess, as Endymion
Once loved the queen of night.

Zenobia.

Unhappy man !

Philip.

You say true. He was indeed scarce human :
He drank life's essences, its sweet and bitter.
But knew nor peace nor ease. He told this lady
(Who loved him dearly, mark !) what I this night
Have told to you. She told her mother,
Who counselled with her father and some friends.
The man was bad or mad or mad and bad,
Corrupt and vile or crazy beyond hope.
It would not do, her father's will was told.
It would not do. That day she sought him out.
Fell on his neck, sobbed as her heart would break.
Begged his forgiveness, blamed his ill-judged views,
His rash avowals, called him false, unkind,
Inconstant as the wind, much more beside—
Then said she could not wed him.

Zenobia.

Unhappy woman.

What said he ?

Philip.

What any man would say.
He promised all things ; swore her views were his.
Her father's views were his. He thought her thoughts.

Saw with her eyes, lived only in her life.
 His views ! He had no views ! She was his queen !
 His heaven, his universe, sun, moon and stars !
 Her love was all he asked of God : no more !
 And so he raved. And she was re-assured,
 And laughed and wept, and went away quite happy.
 He never saw her more ; six months thereafter
 Her parents married her to an old lord,
 Rich as the bank of England. And my friend,
 (He never had been quite a prize you see)
 Was left forlorn.

Zenobia.

And straightway died of love.

Philip.

Not solely. As I said he was no prize ;
 He had nor health nor fortune ; and his body,
 Broken by too much thought, at last succumbed.
 Love helped the slayer, if he did not slay.
 And so poor Julian perished.

Zenobia.

Ill-starred boy,
 A sacrifice to freedom, love and thought.
 I could myself have loved him, and love you
 The more, dear Philip, that you were his friend.
 Could we not, dear, act out his dream, and prove
 That love needs not the sanction of old custom.
 Has right to perfect freedom, asks no bond
 It cannot forge itself ? You say you love me :
 Have asked me for your wife,—and I love you.
 Can we not trust each other's love, and bid
 Society stand back ? We both are rich :
 Fortune has placed me above fear of want.

If one year, two years, six years hence you found
Your love had suffered change, I would not hold you,
I would not then be held. Say, have we strength
To step from out the crowd—to trust ourselves?

Philip.

You are an easy convert.

Zenobia.

No ; no convert,
For I have often thought as did your friend.
Naught is so precious as a perfect love,
And none so wretched as a pair mismated.
I have known such,—my mother was unhappy.
Doubts had I, they have melted into air.
Your friend was wholly right.

Philip.

I hesitate.

We must do nothing rashly. You have courage ;
Perhaps you are too daring. We must think.
I fear it would not do.

Zenobia.

Her father said.

It would not do.

Philip.

Her father? Yes ! O yes !

Ah ! you are brave indeed. How cool it is.
The night is wearing. Let me find your shawl.
Yes, I must think for both—your happiness
Is in my keeping.

Zenobia.

I have no fear.

TO WALT WHITMAN.

Great democrat, great poet, and great man !
Free singer of our sea-rimmed Western shore !
True lover of the people evermore !
Exalter ! liberator ! who dost scan,
With arrowy vision and strong heart, the plan
Of freedom widening 'mid the time's uproar ;
Seeing justice rising through injustice hoar,
With Faith and Truth, twin-seraphs, in the van.

Thy soul's swift pinions oft have borne thee far :
Thy brooding thought the well-loved human race
Hath compassed round. Like to the bright day-star,
Thy kindly rays have lighted up each space
Of gloom and sadness. Weakness, guilt, no bar —
Thy sunlike sympathy glows o'er earth's face.

LOVERS AND ROSES.

*O the roses red 'mid the dark leaves showing,
O the warm blue dome and the large stars glowing,
O the soft South wind on the garden blowing.*

*O the rose of life in the heart of a lover,
O that life were love all the sad earth over—
O that life were love with no grief to cover.*

'I'll write your name with petals of roses,
Of this crimson one, whose proud breast uncloses
To the waiting stars, and her love discloses.'

She laughed, 'Then pray place your own beside it,
Lest it lonely grow, with no grace to hide it,
And the ghost of the rose in the night should chide it.'

'And the stars,' he said, 'will look down upon them,
And each thoughtless breeze will have care to shun
them.
Lest, in passing too near, any wrong be done them.

'And the sisters fair of the dead rose, lying
In the crimson letters, will know that, dying,
She was raised to life in thy name, and, sighing

'Their sweetest breaths in a perfume tender,
An incense holy their love will send her,
While the dews of heaven their freshness lend her.'

*O the roses red 'mid the dark leaves showing,
O the warm blue dome and the large stars glowing,
O the soft South wind on the garden blowing.*

*O the rose of life in the heart of a lover,
O that life were love all the wide earth over,
O that life were love with no grief to cover.*

TO A SLEEPER.

Peace in your heart and sleep upon your lips,
Let day-break banish sorrow ;
When the Night-Angel 'neath the sky-verge dips,
Give life a glad good-morrow.

REAL AND IDEAL.

The Real, the Ideal : how dispart
Beauty from Use becomes the earnest cry :
From Use removed, poor Beauty can but die,
As fades the rose when reft from nature's heart :
In proof whereof find Dante's, Shakspeare's art.
That all earth's sin and ugliness imply.
Realists these, 'twere witless to deny—
Yet their's no realism of the mart,
But life ideal, at heroic strain,
Alert to grasp high action, and to hold
Impassioned standards up of use and gain ;
Their's no poor meagre thought in dusty mould.
And he of heavenly beauty ever fain,
Though based on earth, must search the skies for gold.

HAPPINESS.

A leaden sky, with silver dappled o'er ;
A dull gray street of common sights and sounds ;
A lonely wayfarer deep sunk in gloom ;
A rift of sunshine spreading—then a thought.

Who knocks at my heart ?
Gentle visitor, welcome :
What bring you for me ?
Just a word, just a word,
Shall it ever be thus ?
See'st joy in the distance ?
Why joy is at home,
Look within ! look within !
Pleasure flies his pursuit
Who forever doth chase,
Who forever doth fear !

The wayfarer, with glance at street and sky,
Passed swiftly on, and heaviness fell from him,
As from a runner new-stripped for the race,
On high the rifts of blue were limpid lakes,
And at the horizon's edge the curled clouds,
Like dim-seen figures in a sculptor's dream,
Hung white above the distant deep-blue hills.
The way, each side, was fringed with grassy hem.
And to his heart the voice spake once again.

No more discontent,
With sharp, frozen clasp,
Shall waylay and arrest.
A spiritual pauper
No more shalt thou be.
Thou a beggar for joy !
Let joy emanate from thee.
Be thou rich ! be thou rich !
Giving out with heaped hands.
Would'st be happy ? Be happy.
But thyself to thyself
Must true happiness give.
Crown Peace in thy temple.
Nor abroad look for peace.
Ah be strong ! Ah be strong !
Fearless, faithful and free.

Uplift, as treading air, he journeyed on,
And marveled if no change were in his face,
His walk, his mien. As in a marble frieze,
Or city struck to stone, strange objects passed,
And all seemed dim and far as in a dream.
And men and women passed before him then ;
And he could see their souls, and knew himself
The master over life, while with him stayed
That whisper, telling joy is of ourselves.

MADGE.

Shall I whisper when she passes ?

She ? Sweet Madge, you know.

See ! she comes there—ah, you've missed her,

With her cheeks aglow.

Madge ? Ah, Madge is love and summer,

Sunshine, happiness,

Heaven it is to meet her merely,

Such her power to bless.

Eyes she has that mock the sapphire,

Cheeks that shame the rose.

In her face, as in Love's mirror,

Beauty's image glows.

Beauty's ? Ah yes, love and beauty,

Wit and wisdom she.

Proud ? Nay, garlanded with goodness,

For sweet Madge loves me.

THE SUNLIT EARTH THROUGH HEAVEN
REVOLVING SWEEPS.

The sunlit earth, through heaven revolving, sweeps
In its swift cycle round yon ball of fire ;
The shining orb speeds onward 'mid the choir
Of sister-spheres through crystalline blue deeps
And far sky-spaces, where each star-world keeps
Time with the music of that mighty lyre
Whose breathing is the thrill of life's desire,
The pulse that throbs or when man wakes or sleeps.

Meanwhile here is our town, and here the street
Familiar to my eyes ; the bridge, the square,
The chimneys, spires, the people that I meet,
The old-time aspect and appearance wear :
Like village rustics do we stop and greet,
Scarce conscious of a life more large and fair.

PULSE SWIFTLY O MY HEART !

Pulse swiftly, O my heart !
Give forth thy crimson streams ;
And, though no lyric art
Make music of thy dreams,
Perchance some slight refrain
May yet on earth remain,

When thou art laid away
Where Silence hath her reign,
And childhood's voice at play
Nor bustle of quick men
Can through thy darkened clay
Send one sweet human ray.

DEVELOPMENT.

From creeping, loathly grub to yon fair life,
That, like a flower a-wing, flits o'er the mead,
A mute, pervasive law, mysterious, rife
In all earth's force, blind force doth upwards lead.
From wooly hottentot to Shakspeare's brain
What dark abysmal depths of being flow,
Yet on these wreck-strewn seas each man is fain
Straight onward still to steer his battered prow.
Since in the shadowy fields we call the past,
Where history's torch doth shed a glimmering light,
Among the unnumbered shapes that follow fast,
Some lovely human forms float into sight—
Angelic souls, bright rays struck from the clod.
Lamps fit to burn e'en at the throne of God.

IMMURED.

O for the scent of the moist, fresh earth,
O for the smile of the sun,
O for the gay, green fields, and the birth
Of spring-thoughts one by one.

O for the joy of the heart set free
From books, from thought, from care,
O for a nook 'neath a shady tree,
And the blue of the sun-kissed air.

O for the flowers, the white and gold,
The pink-tipped, azure-starred,
O for the birds, the blithe and bold,
Or speckled or color-barred.

O for the sweep of the glancing stream,
And the clear-seen shapes therein—
The minnows poised in the sunny beam,
And the pebbly glooms they win.

O for river and field and wood,
For floweret and sky and tree,
For the aimless, early-summer mood
Of a listless, wandering bee.

That taps the buds and tastes the dew
And drones in the golden ray,
Leisurely, leisurely slipping through
The live-long happy day.

THE HORIZON-RING.

A little ring encloseth all my world ;

 A precious ring, set round with figures fair :

 A line of gold writ on the amber air,

Soft wreaths of cloud, like tiny wavelets curled,

Strange blue-grey frescoings and mists unfurled :

 And, past the frozen fields and grasses bare,

 Above dark roofs, ascending stair on stair,

In liquid light see domes and spires impearled.

All at the centre of this little ring

 The boyish winds make merry in mad play ;

Among the stricken reeds they sport and sing.

 Aloft two silver stars keep holiday :

And gnomes nuseen are heard, with sudden spring.

 The ice-pools crackling, 'mid black mounds of clay.

IN THE DESERT.

Sad are the dark brown hills :

• Drear is the wall of sky ;
Though life and thought be still,
 In my heart is a passionate cry .

Have I not mused so before

 In the grey ages afar ?

Have I not looked, long ago,

 On the hills and this leaden sky ?

Time—ah how short ! how the soul

 Can stand by the Cæsar's throne :

Can, with the Chaldean sage,

• Traverse the starry blue waste.

Narrow is space, O my soul :

 See'st thou in alien lands,

Lands of the spruce or the palm.

 Mortals who brood as thou brood'st.

Heavy of heart, and look out

 On the sky and the range of hills.

And know that all life's at pause.

 Though the passionate heart doth cry ?

In Athens on such a day,

 In Carthage or Corinth the gay,

Some one, sad-hearted, has looked,

 And mused on the purport of life.

DEATH.

A child of five stood at my side to-day.

And, eager for all knowledge, questioned me

What that mysterious portent, Death, might be :

As, should he, at its coming, cease to play ?

And would all men on earth then pass away ?

But nothing realized till, heedlessly,

I said, exploring still the mystery—

‘Our bodies break and crumble to decay.’

Then clouded his bright brow, and to his eyes

Tears gathered, and a burst of passion came :

A storm of lamentation and sad cries :

He did not ‘*like*’ to die, he said : his frame

Quivered and shook : and stung with sharp surprise.

I named the Soul and life’s undying flame.

CLEOPATRA.

My fillet, Charmian, now, and now that ring
That Antony gave me yesternight to sing
The Bacchic chorus,—child, the serpent one
With crystal gem that dazzles like a sun.

And now my zone : the black and gold will do,
How soft my hair to-day is, lustrous too.
A thought too pale, methinks, this cheek now shows
To match my eye, that still as darkly glows

As yesternight. O Charmian, such a night !
In the clear shine the columns stood out white ;
In moonlit silence all the city lay ;
We left the gardens only when the day

With gold and crimson fir'd the Eastern height.
As pausing at an altar ere his flight
Into the zenith. (Yes, a thought too pale :
When Antony comes their colour will not fail.)

I like this Antony. Dost not love his voice
Full-toned : so musically clear, with choice
Of stern or tender ? and his laugh so free,
So mirthful, banishes solemnity.

He hath love-lore too, Charmian : listen, sweet :
Last night i'the garden, lying at my feet—
Be not so poutish, Charmian—list, I say !
Come nearer, child, nor move so far away.

That's my own sweeting : lying at my feet,
As Cæsar used, and as was very meet,
When, jesting, I essayed his faith to prove,
He swore high Rome he'd barter for my love.

The stars from Heaven he'd snatch to light my brow ;
The glimmering night's rich veil should deck me now.
Did I but wish it ; that by day the sun
Should draw my chariot ; and, his hot race run,

The pallid moon her pearly car should place
At my disposal, while through azure space,
With Antony I sail'd o'er slumb'ring towns,
O'er sleeping seas and zephyr-haunted downs :

My beauty's sight would rouse the Love-Queen's ire ;
Wells were my eyes of ever-living fire ;
Like night my hair in the bright day did show :
The ruddy dawn burned in my cheek's pure glow.

Pure nonsense, Charmian : yet so lightly sped,
With laughing grace, half truth, half fancy-fed :
The best part truth, since, were but his the power,
Eternal bliss, make sure, were in my dower.

Would he might stay : my passion for him grows :
Forever stay : each friend so quickly goes :
E'en Cæsar went—but hark ! among the men—
What Antony ! hast come so soon again ?

WHEN COMES THE SUMMER.

From out the glooming West through the still eve
Comes one with dusk-warm locks and shining eyes
And rose-dark cheeks, whose beauty might retrieve
A world where sin with odious virtue vies,
And from the still clear East a maiden sweet,
Whose lissome shape and lilac-kerchief'd hair
And shy, pure eyes, where joy and sadness meet
Proclaim the spirit of spring, the goddess fair,
And in this garden they join hands and gaze
For one swift, silent moment ere they part;
Then Westward passes spring, the summer stays
A rosebush near, where crimson blossoms start,
Night and the roses first glad homage pay,
June and the birds to-morrow own her sway.

THE NEW ACHILLES.

Achilles I! Behold the prince of men,
Named after him who slew the Trojan hosts.
And dragged great Hector at his chariot wheels.
Him do I emulate. As in a glass
The Grecian hero shews my high disdain
For baser men, my courage and my strength.
Forever prince, for who dare with me vie?
I still am first, all rivals overthrown.
When I come forth upon the city's streets
The trembling groundlings, all agog, admire.
They whisper, Great Achilles—see he comes!
And then I frown, and, should a man appear
That claims acquaintanceship, and asks a smile
With fawning glance, I curse him a good-day,
So that he dare not speak a second word.
And then he slinks aside, hate in his heart.
And envy of my prowess and my pride.

The universe is mine! Apollo's self
Smiles but to light my pathway. And though life,
In these degenerate days, draws to the top
The scum of men, whose democratic stench
Pollutes the atmosphere, I brush them by,
And take my stand their master. Women, too,
The pretty birdlings, who would peck and chirp,
And quarrel brightly for my delectation,
Are now grown bold, and deem themselves she-eagles.
But yet a goodly group cast down their eyes

At my proud coming, grateful for a smile,
Aye, all is wrong ! In this accurséd time
The mob hath sway ; and in all ways of art,
Of literature, of government, of life,
They strive to over-rule the kings of men.
One thing I live for ! to restore the days,
The goodly time, when the base throng did bend,
And, bowing low, unbonnet to their lords.
Now yonder chimney-sweep's my lawful peer !

Ah, there goes Hector ! Hector of our town.
Fair kinsman to my friend, the sweep, no doubt.
Faith ! well I knew it ! Friends, ye are well met !
He makes obeisance to his friend, the sweep,
As he had said. My garments, yea, are clean,
I wear white linen : 'tis by thy permission.
Thou noble son of toil !

Faugh ! I am sick.
My gorge doth rise. What grinning fool is here ?
My eyes flash lightning—would that they might kill !

LES MISERABLES.

As I walked the city street
There was noise of hurrying feet ;
There were merry voices loud ;
There were figures hushed and bowed.

Here a pair of bright eyes glanced,
There a dashing courser pranced,
Here a beggar hobbled by,
Moaning,—Pity ! Charity !

Want and Wealth each other shoulder ;
Sadly muses the beholder,
Wealth and want, delight and woe,
Pity that it should be so !

Misery ! ah misery !
That such wretchedness should be ;
That in London town to-day
Thousands starve who cannot pray.

Mother of the Lands ! O say,
Know you not another way ?
List your starving children's cry ;
Charity ! O charity !

Mother of the Lands ! O tell,
Love you not your children well ?
My own mother loveth me
And my brothers equally.

My own brothers share with me
Her true heart's love equally.
Mother of the Lands ! O tell,
Love you not your sons as well ?

They were of one family,
Loving children at thy knee :
At thy breast was each one nursed,
Which is last and which is first ?

Now they know not one another,
Each is strange unto his brother :
Hate and shame, disease and pain—
This one's loss is that one's gain.

Hear thy wretched children cry :
Misery ! O misery !
Mother of the Lands ! they call,
A true mother be to all !

AMBITION.

Titanic rages, pent or darting far,
Convulsed and darkened, without sight or aim :
Calm-eyed endeavor, through all stress the same,
Strong as the sun-god, in his orbic car.
Nor fearful, like sad Phaëton, to mar
Desired achievement in disastrous shame :
But, when burns low the spirit's lamp of flame,
The ship-wrecked mariner, without a spar,
Alone on the wild sea, such bitter woe
May taste as his who seems then cast away :
And thus the ambitious soul must ever go.
Now at the mercy of the tempest's play.
Now on the billowy swell in easy flow.
Now of the hungry waves the vision'd prey.

PHILOSOPHY.

All undisturbed by hopeless aspiration.
Content when filling the divine behest.
In faithful manhood and true labor blest.
To do fair human service with elation,
And, if success attend or sad frustration,
To work still onward without haste or rest.
To know himself of nature the high guest.
And needing, sooth, no rarer elevation
Than this. Of God the child, of man the lover.
He walks erect the level, sunlit plain.
And though 'mid starry spheres his soul may hover,
Glad is it when recalled to earth again.
Careless and free, through haunts of men a rover,
With equal heart he shares their joy and pain.

FATE.

I.

A moon ago came Summer up this way,
As once did Life on some far-vanished day ;
And, as Life's spirit filled the earth with men,
So Summer's with green leaves the branches grey.

II.

Ah, if 'twere clearly shewn, as it may be,
That men, as leaves upon a giant tree,
As leaves depend for life on sun and rain,
Could praise or blame attach to thee or me ?

III.

Or if one saw, as in a crystal glass,
The slow, long ages of the planet pass,
The generations of man's race go by,
Even to the days when man half-human was.

IV.

And if the myriad shapes that come and go,
With seeming freedom in the brilliant show,
He saw were pushed and pushed by hands unseen,
Here to good fortune, there to overthrow.

V.

A generation is a summer's leaves,
Its history the reckoning of sheaves ;
Another summer's pride the tree of life
To suns and rains, called joys and sorrows, gives.

VI.

This leaf a Phidias, this a Pericles,
 This shining one a bold Miltiades :
 And here the traitor of Thermopylae;
 Here Plato, leaning to his Socrates.

VII.

Upon the self-same stem free-men and slaves,
 True workers, idlers, honest hearts and knaves,
 Heroes and dastards in a golden beam :
 A colony upon a branchlet waves.

VIII.

Say you this slave a freeman might have stood?
 This knave a hero, generous and good?
 This cripple winner of Olympian games?
 This lop-eared leaf the shapeliest in the wood?

IX.

Or may one see it in another way?
 If half crazed Hamlet did Polonius slay,
 If crazed Ophelia gives herself to death,
 Are these the movers, or was Shakspeare, pray?

X.

Act they apart or move they of his will?
 Free lives or puppets to creative skill?
 Or do we say the Jew, the Moor, are he?
 The Dane, the Thane, alike are wondrous Will?

XI.

Shakspeare is Caliban, is Ariel too :
 But whence came Shakspeare? from what fountain drew
 He nutriment for fair, ignoble, base?
 Shakspeare's creations : his creator who?

XII.

A vaster world we see— of Moors and Jews,
Midsummer dreams of beauty, pirate crews ;
Hidalgoes, grandees, barons, queens and kings ;
Moonlighted gardens, palaces and stews.

XIII.

Here dramas of all ages, times and climes :
Behold the flawless actors, life's true mimics ;
The perfect speakers of allotted parts,
In birth-scenes, death-scenes, joy-scenes, pantomimes.

XIV.

Here vice incarnate stalks : here virtue shines :
The tyrant and the martyr con their lines :
The beggar and the lord give earnest heed
The hidden prompter deed and word assigns.

XV.

Hark to the pleasing jugglers where they stand !
The conjurers divine, severe or bland,
As suits the special wonder to be shewn :
What would you have ? 'Tis yours but to command.

XVI.

Would'st see the circle squared ? or black shew white ?
Would'st have the stars by day ? the sun by night ?
The fishes swim in air ? the mid-sea depths
Made perfect medium for a swallow's flight ?

XVII.

Naught you can wish ! And this above the rest :
The crowning marvel, far too grave for jest ;
A miracle—indeed it is no less !
Of juggler's logic 'tis the weighty test.

XVIII.

He holds you up a man : 'A man, you see :
 Predestined or elect, both bond and free ;
 A fated saint or sinner : yet is he
 Free-agent—shaper of his destiny.'

XIX.

'Heh ! presto ! all is ready—close your eyes !'
 'I see not yet,' a looker-on replies.
 'Not yet?' a squint-eyed man beside him cries.
 'Not yet !' in varying tones of shocked surprise.

XX.

Nor is the riddle's reading far to seek.
 Strong natures have strong wills, weak natures weak.
 Will is desire expressed. Your dummy may
 Will and still will, nor win the power to speak.

XXI.

Who prates of wisdom, freedom, virtue, sin ?
 Who plies the lash to flog his malice in ?
 Who bawls abousetop, in his piety,
 To losers curses, cheers for those who win ?

XXII.

Is it not written ? He who runs may read.
 In the beginning One, in very deed.
 Toss'd in the earth the germ. Is Man a weed ?
 Be His the harvest, then, who sowed the seed.

THOUGHT.

Thought is translation : 'tis the flesh made word.
The world made spirit, matter changed to mind ;
New fiats of new births ; the gross refined ;
Th' incumbent darkness and the silence stirred
At each ' Let there be light ' of poet heard :
The golden stairway which the ages wind
Up to the house of souls ; 'tis the designed,
Fate-ordered transcript of earth's meanings blurred.

As animate inanimate doth hold,
So higher lives the lower lives enroll.
When Thought's high spheres life's lower spheres enfold
The toiling caravans shall reach their goal.
And when the listing soul earth's tale hath told
The heavens and earth shall vanish as a scroll.

CAGED.

Here, half-asleep, I sit,
And still the old-time yearning,
Within slow pulses turning,
Demands expression fit.

Cries, Let me feel my wings !
O freedom, freedom give me !
Of this dead load relieve me ;
The bird flies ere it sings.

Against the bars of sense
It beats and strains in madness,
With little moans of sadness,
And sudden cries intense.

SNOW.

Now the moisture caught from ocean,
Drawn up from the liquid desert
Through the fluid golden ether,
Up, far up unto the sun-sphere,
Comes again in soft, white blossoms,
Garmenting in lawn the landscape.
Mantling o'er the summer gardens,
Flooding thick the gentle valleys,
Of the brown hills making pillows,
Feathery mounds, whereon the genii
Of the North may rest in dreamland.

CREATION.

As at the coming of an angel fair,
With heaven's glory yet upon his wings,
And heaven's music in his speech, that brings
Glad news of life in that Elysian air,
So feels the poet when this mood so rare
Exalts him, and the raptured spirit sings,
With love, with longing, for those higher things,
To see, to utter which, it now may dare.

The sky, perchance, may ope, and visions bright
As dazzled Raphaël in youthful dreams,
May dawn in splendor on his ravished sight;
The weary earth, with super-sensuous beams,
May be transfigured in a glow of light,
And shining argosies dot seas and streams.

SONG

Poor phantoms of a dream.
We seem, and pass away :
Mere ripples on a stream,
Still broken into spray.
The passions and delights,
The vanities and spites,
The war of wrongs and rights,
But seem, and pass away.
Poor phantoms of a dream,
We seem, and pass away.

What solace but to sing?
What other solace, pray?
Since youth has taken wing,
And manhood will not stay.
Since youth's sweet spring is past,
And summer follows fast,
What is it that will last?
What other solace, say?
What solace but to sing?
What other solace, pray?

MINOR POETS.

The storm has spent its strength, and a pure peace
Comes with the restful eye ; a spirit clear,
A presence cool and fragrant, brings release
From care, and low, sweet voices soothe and cheer.
The air is vocal : the blithe grasshopper,
In the still distance, holds a concert high,
As for the courts of heaven ; and more near,
Beneath the glistening maple-sprays, where lie
The scattered diamonds in the matted grass,
The cricket's silvery interlude is heard.
But when beside the river's bank you pass.
A wondrous singing comes, as if a bird
Had given its song to every wayside weed.
And melody had sprung from every seed.

TELL ME WHAT IS LOVE, MY HEART?

Tell me what is love, my heart?
Thou can'st surely say now,
Ere the wonder doth depart
That hath come this way now.

Love's a tempest, heard 'mid trees
By the summer weightied,
'Tis the honey (hive and bees)
Crushed by swain belated.

'Tis a ripple on the calm
Tide of tranquil feeling :
'Tis a soul-prick, and the balm
Held to it for healing.

Nay, I said, but tell, my heart,
Say it in good sooth now,
What is love? Ere Love depart
Tell me all the truth now.

For a willing learner thou,
In and out of season,
Must the secret know, I trow :
Hath it rhyme or reason?

Love, ah love, my heart replied,
Is the mystic token,
Through the ages, undenied,
Soul to soul hath spoken :

'Tis a rosy-winged delight,
 From earth's cares releasing ;
 'Tis the spirit's source of might,—
 Fount of joy unceasing ;

'Tis a perfume from the East
 O'er a garden blowing ;
 'Tis a new face at a feast,
 Or a strange star showing ;

'Tis a sweet surprise, a fear
 With a fond hope twining ;
 'Tis the casket's self grown dear
 For the jewel shining ;

'Tis the tremor in the breast
 Of the lark at waking ;
 'Tis the young moon's silver crest
 And the grey dawn breaking.

A WINTER EVENING.

Grey-robed December should have empire here.

Yet in the purple depth of yon fair sky,

June's dreamy dusk and mellow richness lie :

No hint there is of autumn branches sere :

No hint of wintry winds so chill and drear :

Soft Southern breezes seem to pause and die

'Mid languid boughs ; the starry lamps on high
Burn heavily their silver tapers clear.

In twilight gloom the city's temples stand :

Their spires and turrets strike athwart the Bear,
Who stretches his great length on either hand.

Lazily couchant in his Northern lair.

As if by angel pinions gently fanned.

Glad Hesper blazes in the westward air.

O MY LOVE HATH STARRY EYES.

O my love hath starry eyes :
And with a sweet surprise,
With a sweet surprise and fine
Will they darken into mine
When I say how much I love her,
When I say how much I love her,

Like the flush of dawn her cheek
Will mantle when I speak,—
When I say the morning's rose
'Neath her brown eyes softly glows—
When I say how much I love her,
When I say how much I love her.

From her lips, a cupid's bow,
Where hide pearls row on row,
A light, silvery laugh is sent
When, with ardor innocent,
I would say how much I love her,
I would say how much I love her.

AMARYLLIS.

The boy looked up : and passed before him then
A being radiant as e'er dazzled men :
As Juno stately, lovely as love's queen,
Lips ripe as Hebe's. Dian's brow serene.
His spell-fast, reverential gaze she saw,
A startled look, where rapture blent with awe.
A little smile, as wintry sunshine sweet,
As wintry sunshine cold, as transient, fleet.
A moment lightens o'er the perfect face ;
Then both are gone : and with them beauty, grace.
The sky was blue but now, and now 'tis grey ;
The day was fair, all faded is the day.
A little smile, like wintry sunshine chill,
Flits o'er *his* face, without his thought or will.
He feels a mystery and knows not why.
This dream ! this vision ! goddess of the sky !
This queen of blue and gold : such eyes ! such hair !
Was never woman so divinely fair.
But then his troubled heart, those parted lips,
That smile perplexing,—never was eclipse
Of cheap and common, use and wont, more clear ;
Life had grown complex, enigmatic, dear.
Yet this he saw, however mystified,
That here was beauty—beauty glorified,
Made radiant, peerless, innocent, divine ;
Youth's perfect dream : love's own true bond and sign ;
His heart's ideal, sent by heaven above.
Ah, love was heaven ! heaven indeed was love !

He turns : he meets a friend. You saw her ? Who ?
She of the queenly tread and eyes of blue.
What, Amaryllis ! come, my friend ! go to !
Her queenly tread ! ha ! ha ! her eyes of blue !
You knew not ? What ? We part here. Then, good-day.
My friend, beware ! let not your footsteps stray !

The boy, heart-stricken, finds a lonely street.
He wanders on and on with faltering feet.
Within his soul dark chaos reigns, but still
A little smile, as wintry sunshine chill,
Shines o'er the gloom and turmoil, as a beam
From heaven might o'er hell's rout and horror gleam.

IN THE FOREST.

Dull-red and brown, the forest carpet spreads,
The outworn mantle of the dead year's prime :
Witch autumn, following sweet summer-time,
On silent wing first the wood's mazes threads,
Flaming with scarlet hues and golden-reds
Its sober green, till not the orient clime,
In morning's crimson pomp, showed more sublime,
And now the naked trees uplift their heads,
Stripped e'en to desolation.

Lo ! mine eyes
Turn to the West, where, from rose-misted seas,
Beyond a gilded waste, in state arise,
As at another Autumn's witcheries,
Spires, domes and pinnacles—a fairy prize,
Limned clear through tracery of woodland trees,

GALATEA.

Dream-symbol of the artist's prayerful yearning ;
Type of the unborn loveliness to be,
Ah ! may the gods graunt life,—and fair discerning
To wonder-smitten souls that throng to see.

QUESTIONING.

Should Joy be cup-bearer to hearts that bleed ?
And minstrel-chief to souls that walk in gloom ?
Or may one, stumbling 'neath the weight of doom,
Pipe entertainment on a broken reed ?
Rest from the striving. Let some happier throat
Swell with the music thy parched soul hath heard :
While in the thicket lonely a sad bird,
Droop-winged, shall list afar its own high note.

THE POET.

He sits in sullen mood with folded hands,
While at the portals of his being plays
That soundless music of his nights and days :
An elfin storm, far off in unseen lands,
Moans silently, and shapes in shrouded bands
Gloom dimly by : then rise through unknown ways,
And, passing forth into the noon's full blaze,
Make for him that new world his soul demands.
The ocean-depths of Being, storm and calm ;
The changing life that thence doth upward flow :
The Secret, O the Secret, who may know ?
The windings of the Mystery, who trace ?
Who utter that deep, universal psalm,
The earth's high canticle of prayer and praise ?

LOOKING FORWARD.

I stood looking backward,
Born into the day, and walking the ways of men,
In my turn gazing upon the sun, the moon, the beauteous
 shows of earth,
In my turn searching beneath and beyond these—
Searching for the eternal values, the riches which perish
 not,
Backward I turned to the enchanting distance,
To the beauty by poets sung as not of earth,
To the myths of gods and goddesses,
To romances and enchanted gardens, rare adventures
 and delights,
To the old poets, the old tales so full of beauty ;
And I said, I will weave for myself tales of beauty,
I also will carve shapes of loveliness, hewn from the
 wealth of the antique ;
I too may dream the old dreams since I know the eternal
 longings,
Loveliness, I said, is not of to-day :
It is known only of the few,
Life is barren and grey,
Life is gross and vulgar and dull,
I will look backward, I will imagine enchanted bowers,
 palaces, ladies and knights,
I will escape the commonplace,
I will dwell in the impalpable, dreaming sweet dreams—

When, behold, a thunder peal !
A burst of music !
A light as of the sudden sun !
A call sublime and grand !
Startling me from my dreams,
Sending the blood to my heart, whence it surged to
throbbing pulses and temples.—
And lo ! the purpose of life was changed.
I looked on the world and accepted it ;
Accepted the common, the gross, the dull ;
No more wished to be of the elect ;
No more wished to stand with eyes turned backward or
in the clouds ;
To dream dreams, to surfeit with perfumed fancies.

Henceforth, I said, the function of the poet is changed,
for me it is changed.
I demand that the earth shall be beautiful for all men ;
That the gods and goddesses shall walk the common
ways ;
That they shall not be housed in skyey mansions, but in
the dwellings that line each street.
Henceforth I demand that the exclusive be done away
with ,
That all men and all women shall meet on equal terms.
Henceforth, I said, I will have no poetry that all cannot
share ;
No more heroics, no more worship of genius, of power.
Genius shall be happy to serve,
Power shall be happy to serve,
For O the shame to sit contented and enjoy while my
brother starves and dies.

Away with such baseness ! I will accept no good that
is not the right of every son of man.
I will have perfection here on earth.
Though it take a thousand thousand years, I will sing of
the day when the dreams shall be made real ;
When men and women, radiant in beauty, love and joy,
shall tread the gardens of earth,
Fairer than Greek gods,
Happiness their birthright, beauty their common possession.

II.

A Mad Philosopher.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

GUSTAVE COROT, A French Philosopher.

ULRIC ST. JOHN, An English Philosopher.

WINIFRED ST. JOHN, St. John's daughter.

ELMOND COROT, Corot's son.

ALICIA MAYNARD.

ALBERT STRANGE, Sir Edward's son.

CORNELIA HOWARD, St. John's secretary.

LADY STRANGE, Sir Edward's wife and St. John's sister.

SIR EDWARD STRANGE.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, President of the United States of America.

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, Emperor of France.

HARCOURT, a gentleman.

THE ENGLISH AMBASSADOR AT PARIS.

PRINCE TALLEYRAND.

Officers, gypsies, attendants, &c.

SCENE,—chiefly in England : during part of the play at Washington and in Paris.

A MAD PHILOSOPHER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

ULRIC ST. JOHN'S *House in London. The Library.* ST. JOHN *sits writing at a table covered with books and papers.* CORNELIA HOWARD *stands scanning a bookshelf, from which she takes a volume. She glances through this, but during the conversation puts it down and draws near the table.*

ST. J. The scheme is vast, Cornelia, worth a life's,
Aye, many lives' surrender in its cause ;
Nor these the lives of ordinary men,
But the world's best and brightest might have joy
To sacrifice their being's end and aim
Toward its attainment.

COR. Joy indeed, in full
And brimming measure : Yes, the time is ripe.
The slow, sure years have brought another birth,
A new Messiah to the sons of men.
Gone from his palace has the last fair prince,
Who shew'd the flower of peace and star of hope ;
And these same goodly halls where once he dwelt,
Striving to win from rapine and foul greed
Unhappy man, are proven all too small,
Lacking in grace and symmetry of truth.

With mathematics abstract, and the laws
That govern lives of planets, as of states,
He has not lost the warmer touch which feels
For poor, unhappy individual lives.
The Bayard among thinkers, he has tinged
Wisdom's cold cheek with hue of generous red,
And fired her breast with deep chivalric longings.

ST. J. Though to the general world quite unknown,
A few of the more forward in each land
Already recognize him. They are stirred
Profoundly by the depth and tenderness
Of that strange, passionate love he bears mankind.

COR. I am glad he has some following.
He will have more : the young, the brave, the true,
The ardent and the generous everywhere,
The women and the workers in all lands,
And all that beldam Custom, who doth sit,
Weaving strange webs to snare the souls of men,
Hath not enmeshed within her subtle toils,
When they do understand him, will enroll
Beneath his glorious flag.

ST. J. Some of your glow
And his I feel within me. Yet mere fire,
Unless directed wisely, may burn up,
And shew but poor results. Our several ardors
We must restrain, yea even must repress ;
Then, like the imprisoned steam, they shall have force,
My fortune, and what influence I can wield,
I place at Corot's service : they are his,
Though scarce a hero, and now somewhat old,
I willingly would yield my life's poor remnant
To see the good cause triumph. Yet he must,
As wary generals do, hear skilled advisers.

COR. 'Tis good of you to grant him leadership
Thus readily in our great undertaking,
Whose best success so largely must depend
On what yourself can do. For, with your friends,
So many of them powerful, and the fame,
Greater than Corot's, that your work has won,
You easily might claim to be the head
And chief promoter—

ST. J. No, that place is Corot's ;
His vision's range was wider than was mine,
His insight truer into Nature's laws ;
The grand discoveries of the age are his ;
And his the flaming heart afire with love.
It is his glory to have been the first
To luminously teach that human lives,
Like to the planets circling in their orbs,
Are governed by undeviating rules,
By laws unerring and inexorable,
And that nowhere in the wide universe
Exists a spot where the law does not reign.

COR. On Saturday, then, we shall see himself ?

ST. J. On Saturday.

[ST. JOHN resumes his writing. CORNELIA takes up her
book and goes out of the room.]

SCENE II.

SIR EDWARD STRANGE'S *House in Surrey. The Drawing Room.* SIR EDWARD is standing in the wide embrasure of an oriel-window, which commands a view of a sunlit garden, smooth lawns, hedges and shrubberies, and lines of trees. LADY STRANGE is seated at another window, from which can be seen a fountain playing, flower-beds, and, through the green of the trees and grass, a dark, level stretch of drive. -

SIR ED. I' faith it looks as if the higher Powers,
Those lesser ones, I mean, that rule the seasons,
And dwell, perchance, upon the moon's bright shore,
Had glanced with favor on our merry-making,
Else why, from the dull drip of last week's rain,
And the fierce, warring storm of yestereve,
Should have emerged this innocent, blithe morn?
Last night the lightning flashed in fork and flame,
And the deep thunder groaned and roared so loud
As it would rip the timbers of the world,
And scatter earth to chaos. But we sank
Into soft arms of sleep, and lo! on waking,
A tranquil, bright-faced boy stands at the door,
A gold-haired, blue-eyed lad, with such frank smile,
He might have been one of the first fresh days
That followed on creation.

LADY S. A storm, you know,
Is always followed by a calm.

SIR ED. No doubt! no doubt! But this fair day, I'll
swear,
Was sent especially by the kindly sprites,

Who keep their dwelling in the lunar halls,
To pleasure our young people. Here they come,—
Is't not so girls?

(*Enter WINIFRED ST. JOHN, ALICIA MAYNARD and
ALBERT STRANGE.*)

WIN. AND ALL. What is? What is?

SIR ED. Is not this day a special providence?
One sent in answer to your urgent need
Of sunshine and bright skies?

WIN. AND ALL. O yes, indeed!

ALB. I make no doubt it is a day reserved,
One picked and chosen for our festival;
Perchance one taken from its proper time,
And set down at this date. And then, to make
Assurance still more sure, the day before
A storm arrives and clears the air to sweetness.

SIR ED. Just what I have declared: but this good
lady,
Like a false infidel, would not believe me.

LADY S. Has Rupert seen that all is now prepared?

ALB. Yes, everything is done; we only wait
The arrival of the guests.

SIR ED. You will not be kept waiting, for but now
I saw a carriage winding through the trees,
And here come two on horseback.

ALB. Then we must go.

ALL. O let us haste to meet them!

(*Exeunt WINIFRED, ALICIA and ALBERT.*)

SIR ED. We must go forth and mingle with the
guests.
Though not for us to foot it in the dance.

As once we featly did, yet we may pass
 From one to other of the happy groups,
 And share a measure of their fresh young mirth,
 The part of the old must be to wisely find
 Enjoyment in the pleasures of their children.

LADY S. Yes : we have had our day. A happier one
 It scarcely could have been. I hope the girls
 Will reap enjoyment from the one now passing.
 'Twill please poor Winifreda, fresh from London,
 And with our friends she can renew acquaintance.

SIR ED. What think you of the other—of Miss May-
 nard?

LADY S. She's pretty and engaging.

SIR ED. She hath a nimble wit, for which I like her.
 And, if I err not widely, Albert, too,
 Finds in her much to please him.

LADY S. I had not noticed it. Winifred always has
 been his favorite.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*The same. The grounds. A rain of music heard.
 Marquises are on the lawns. Small flags, Chinese
 lanterns, &c., hung from the trees and bushes.
 Ladies and gentlemen are moving about the walks,
 and standing in groups chatting. Enter ALBERT
 and ALICIA.*

ALB. 'Tis a fair scene. Nature herself is jocund :
 And flower and shrub and each small blade of grass
 Wear gayer colors and a livelier green
 The rose's cheek takes on a deeper blush,
 The chalice'd lily looks more snowy white.

And those dear flowers upon the human tree—
Buds, rose or lily, or in riper bloom,
Eclipse their gentle sisters of the earth.

ALL. Rose-buds and lilies ! gems and gemlike stars !
Winds languorous and sultry summer eves !
And all the dreamy south wafts to the north,
Woven o' the tissue-webs of vagrant fancy !
Is Winifred, now, a lily-bud or rose ?
And what should all you men be ?

ALB. We ? O poor shrubs we ! Indeed, no more.
With here and there a scarlet tinge, mayhap,
To testify distinction : or, at best,
A sunflower, hollyhock, or tiger lily ;
These be the masculine aristocracy :
The stately sunflower and the warrior lily
The soldiers are ; the peaceful hollyhock,
With modest bearing and a courteous glance,
Doth represent the silken-vested suitors,
The artists, poets, doctors, and all those
Who wear fine clothes and keep their fingers shapely.

ALL. Well, you have borne off your metaphor
With partial failure ; yet you have not told me
Whether your cousin is the rose or lily.

ALB. Which is the queen of flowers ?

ALL. The rose, by all accounts.

ALB. Then Winifred is queen-lily ; yet not so,
A ruddier stream doth flow along her life
Than any such pale queen's. In sooth, I think
We must invent some richer nomenclature
To classify our spacious human garden.

ALL. Perhaps Miss Harcourt is a rose—a human one.

ALB. She might be if she did not lack the perfume,
The rose's soul—besides she is too florid.

ALL. A flower too florid ! Come, you must explain ?
Since that to be a flower one must be florid,
Being a flower, one then must florid be.

I fear some rose's perfume overpowers you.

ALB. Some roses have a perfume overpowering.

ALL. I would be told if I am lily or rose.

ALB. A rose ! a rose ! the fairest in the garden !

ALL. You stir my indignation. I must be
A tall and stately lily, crystalline
And slender, yet not lacking perfect grace.
I know some lilies that I dare not envy.

(Enter SIR EDWARD STRANGE and LADY STRANGE.)

SIR ED. What ! what ! a pair of laggards ! and the
music

Pouring forth breezy Terpsichorean strains,
Such as would lift Diogenes from his tub
And set him dancing on the village green.
Just now I felt a rage within my feet,
And cut some capers to my lady's wonder—
We once could lead a measure.

LADY S. You see poor men, though youth have long
forsworn them,
Still go accompanied by the imp conceit.

ALL. It doth grow weaker, madam, the poor imp
Doth share the fortunes of his life companion ;
In youth he waxes powerful, stout and lusty,
In age the shadow of his former self.

LADY S. Then what a lusty imp must yours have
been,
That still hath so much vigor in his veins.

(To SIR EDWARD.)

ALL. Alas, I did not mean so to apply it !

I was but thinking of too froward youth.

ALB. It is not well to use a two-edged sword.
Since, being swung, the innocent may fall.

SIR ED. Ha! ha! But have you seen the fortune-tellers?

They came to the hall-gates, and asked admission
To tell the fortunes o' the pretty ladies.

I saw them down beside the Neptune fountain.
Surrounded by a bevy of bright maids,—

Two of them, dusky queans, in scarlet bands,
And tricked with berries of the mountain ash.

ALL. Why, here they come!

(Enter WINIFRED, HARCOURT and two Gypsies. Ladies and gentlemen following.)

WIN. If any here would read the book of fate,
These are two sibyls who, with piercing ken,
Can look far down into the dim to-come,
And the true drama of each personal life,
That there is shadowed forth in spectral wise,
Can shew in outline to our denser vision.
All others with the oracle have had speech,
And now, Alicia, it is your good fortune.

ALL. Of fortune, good or ill, I am not curious,
But I was never one to spoil good sport.
Who else has heard the thing she wished to hear?

WIN. My fortune has been told.

HAR. And mine.

LADIES. And mine. And mine. And mine.

ALL. But, for the uplifting of the mystic veil,
The sibyl's palm should in advance be crossed
With gold or silver of what coin I know not.

HAR. By special favor and kind dispensation.

It seems, for once, preliminaries wouted,
Such as you speak of, have to-day been waived.
The sibyl but requires to see your hand.

ALL. (*Extending her hand.*)

A happy life give me and length of years.

1ST GYP. Long life and happy years are plainly
marked :

Much will you travel and see many lands,
With strange adventures both by land and sea.
Love do I see, and marriage in due course—
Though here the lines are somewhat strangely mixed.
Methinks two suitors wait upon your hand :
Both fair, yet neither does your heart regard—

ALL. Wrong!—both are so fair I cannot choose be-
tween them.

1ST GYP. But here a third—one neither dark nor
fair—

Comes in, who loves you better than these twain :
And his true love in wedlock you reward.
At first the sky is dark, but, at this point,
The future grows untroubled, free from care.

ALL. If one can be called care-free who is thus
chased about by land and water ! I'd as soon be the
flying Dutchman, that races hither and thither on the
high seas, frightening poor sailors from their wits ! What
should I do among cannibals and South Sea Islanders ?
I'm for a peaceable life. I had rather marry a parson
than this pirate-captain you have wed me to. And
then I've set my heart on one of these same fair men :
I'll have no other.

WIN. You must be content,—the oracle hath spoken :
'Tis better calmly to accept our fate
Than dully to upbraid the unchanging stars.

ALL. But to have a man thus thrust upon you—and to visit all lands! I had not thought this was in my book. Who would have dreamed that my father, with one child, and that a maid, should have an explorer and geographer in the family. Strange are the ways of destiny.

1ST GYP. Shall I tell your fortune, sir?

(To ALBERT.)

ALB. I thank you : not to-day.

(*Exit gypsies, ladies and gentlemen.*)

SIR ED. What Albert! Not have your fortune told?

ALB. I'll trust no oracle but that of Delphos
To sketch the fated picture. These, I fear,
Are not accredited agents of Apollo.

ALL. Without soul's perjury you may swear that.
Were Delphos not so far I'd journey thither,
If but to warn the god he loses fame
By these impostors.—Winifred, you seem pleased :
What happy fortune sleeps along your palm?

HAR. Her's is not quite so chequered.

WIN. 'Tis strange enough.

Though I am not to travel round the sphere,
I wed with one who will be something travelled :
For he comes to me from a distant land —
A stranger, dark, and of an unmatched form.
One fault, or virtue, if you will, he has,
Of worldly goods his portion'd share is small.
But, as an offset, in all beauteous grace
Of mind and person he is nobly dowered.
Of him do I grow passionately enamored,
And he of me tempestuously —
We marry, and thereafter live in fairy.

ALL. No marvel you are blithe. Will you not change?
 I'll gladly give my Dutchman for your Frenchman
 I know he's French—don't mind the distant land—
 Some count, who in the revolution saved
 His head, but lost chateau and park, will come
 O'er sea, with noble magnanimity,
 To wed an English heiress.

LADY S. How fast the dancers whirl! 'Tis some
 reel
 Or cotillon they dance.

SIR ED. Away! let's to them! Albert, and young
 ladies,
 You miss the prime o' the fun. Perhaps you dance not?
 Do you not dance?

ALB. O yes; we all are dancers. If, Miss Maynard,
 Such honor may be mine?

ALL. So courteous a request can have but one reply.

SIR ED. Away then! away!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

London. ULRIC ST. JOHN'S Library. GUSTAVE COROT, ST. JOHN and CORNELIA HOWARD are seated about a table. EDMOND COROT is also seated, but at a short distance from the table, half-way between it and an open window. While his father is speaking he listens slightly with the air of one to whom the recital is not new, but who, nevertheless, retains a diminished interest in it.

ST. J. Yes; I have read the pamphlet, and to me
 It seemed an exposition clear and full,
 That shews the scope and plan of your great work,

With all the principles therein contained
Set forth in brief concision,

COROT. As you know,
A pamphlet will be read when larger works
Are passed unheeded by—

COR. I read it, sir, with all your other works,
Yet, now I am in presence of their author,
I long to hear, from his own earnest lips,
Expression oral of those written truths
That from the voiceless page could stir my soul,
And on my mind, so long immersed in night,
Let in the promise of a larger dawn.

COROT. My friends, the story may be shortly told :
The spirit of man, insatiable, athirst,
Is ever striving for itself to make
A wider circle, more exalted flight.
In æons of past time it struggled up,
From primal sources still to us unknown,
Through lower forms of beast, bird and fish,
Until at last in the intelligent mind,
The convolute and world-mirroring brain,
It found an organ, instrument and home.
This human spirit, insatiable, athirst,
Surecharged with impulse toward a far-off good—
With impulse, yearning, hunger, what you will,
Surecharged and laden by the primal force,
Standing at last erect beneath the skies,
And gazing on the pageant of the year,
By day the blue o'erhanging canopy—
A dome of azure with an eye of fire,
Whose burning glance withdrawn, the tender eye
Came leading forth her troops of shining stars,
And in their midst serene the silver moon.

Beholding all the season's magic change :
The snows of winter, summer's green and gold,
The mystery of the spring's reviving power,
The marvel of ripe autumn's sere decline,
He sought an explanation and a cause,
Not far to seek they seemed : the dazzling orb,
The moon's sweet majesty, the tranquil stars,
The winds, the waters and the win-l-tossed trees,
And all strange forces, beauteous shows of earth
Should have for author and sustaining cause
A power or powers such as in himself
He felt determining to motion, act.
Thus in his mind he fashioned spirits, gods :
Endowing these with forms like to his own,
Sway'd by emotions similar, tasting joys,
And sharing sorrows such as those he knew.
A god did drive the chariot of the sun
Athwart the heaven, springing from the sea
And to the sea descending : gods did move
The stars across the crystalline blue vault :
And a divinity led to her throne
The lady moon, fair queen of night's dim realm.
Thus, in his image, did man make his gods
In the beginning,—thus he likewise made
Conclusions as to sources, endings, laws—
What now philosophy we call and science :
And thus he made religion. Thus, in short,
He built himself a spiritual abode,
A circle where the soul might spread its wings,
Ere it grew strong for ever loftier flights,
(These, mark, were but the thoughts of infant mind,
The guesses of men groping toward the light,
Like phantoms vast the centuries loom by,

The hurrying generations rise and pass,
And with their march the spirit waxeth strong,
And ever grows in wisdom, faith and love.)
At last conception comes of one sole cause,
Beginningless, eternal, infinite,
A sea no plummet sounds, one whose confines
No wing may ever touch, an awful thought—
To call that thought, which thought may nowise reach,
Transcending and containing scope of mind.
No more an angry god, from the clear sky,
Smote in the thunderbolt and lightning flash :
No more the sea was, by a god's caprice,
With storm convulsed or soothed to summer calm :
No more the sun, the moon, the myriad stars,
Were led by angels o'er a crystal dome—
The crystal dome was shattered. In the light
Of that new vision which the soul had seen,
The boundless universe had opened out.
Strange seas were shewn for mariners to sail ;
Strange seas and shores to travel and explore,
With stars for continents and glistening isles
Whereat to take sweet rest and harborage.
The earth, no more the universal heart,
With sun and moon and stars for serving lights.
Though it had lost a seeming central place,
Took its true station in the general plan,
A sister of bright multitudinous orbs,
That, in their courses through ethereal space,
Obey the law voiced by the All-Supreme.
For now, instead of countless deities,
Fickle and passionate even as mere men,
Whose will capricious might creation fling
Back into chaos, and the ordered spheres

Send madly plunging from their orbit paths,
Laws delicate as potent, silken bonds,
Unseen and silent as unuttered thoughts,
Yet strong as steel divinely tempered is,
(To use weak figures of poor human speech)
The heavenly hosts guide on their destined way,
The Lawgiver ! His name I dare not name,
The One from whom Existence bubbling springs :
The One to whom all Being's forces flow ;
The One, adorable, beloved, divine,
To whom ecstatic passion, crystal thought,
Aspire forever with immortal longing,
And thus was rescued from erratic chance,
From blind confusion and dark fear of wrong,
This universe where law doth ever reign,
Nor aught can hap but by the will supreme
Of that omnipotent and unknown One,
First, in its onward flight, the soul perceived
The stars responsive to the law divine :
Then in the forces of our terrene ball,
Inanimate, the law was seen to hold :
More complex growing, in organic life
Appeared unto the student's eye devout
The law, controlling as in simpler forms :
Then, last and crowning victory of all,
In man himself, in mind, society,
Throughout his moral, intellectual life,
As in his physic being, the great law,
Servant and master, was made manifest,
And in this circle it hath made itself,
That has for boundary the shoreless deep,
The soul's first wisdom is to seek the law,
Its highest wisdom is to know the law,

The law obeying, it escapes all sin,
And fits itself for unimagined flights
Will leave even dreams behind.

Do these things call

For fuller demonstration ?

ST. J.

No, my friend,

All hitherto is light.

COR.

Pray, sir, proceed ;

What is to come may ope the gates of heaven.

COROT. Oh no, it can no more than point the way ;

But that it will do this I'd stake my soul,

If souls were hazarded on such a wager.

COR. Souls have been hazarded and lost for less.

COROT. They were not lost, poor souls, they were not
lost ;

Though for high service to true spirit ends
Many indeed seem wasted. This doth lead
To what I now would say. Though foremost minds,
Upon the mountain-tops, have rent the veil,
And flown afar into the freer air.

The multitude yet in the valleys tread,
And stagger under burdens hard to bear,
Miled by creeping mists and meteor-beams,
Those in the vanguard have discerned the law,
Have seen the spirit's confines widen out
Unto infinity, and new faiths arise,

Departing from man's early youthful dream.
These are the leaders in the grand career ;
The pure of heart, with strong and steadfast souls,
The people have not yet attained the light ;
And the great problem we attempt to solve
Is how to lead them from the nether shade.
For them the universe is still contained
Within the bounds once fixed by infant man,
The old mythologies retain their vogue ;

With fabulous cosmogonies of eold,
Begot of ignorance and dim fantasy.
We find theologies as wild and vain,
Dishonorable both to gods and men.
And thus, though physicists have long declared
That in true science of the starry plan
The sacred books are wanting; that in all
Relating to the birth of this, our earth,
Like ignorance the sacred records shew ;
That of man's origin and destiny
They tell tales fitting their dull, straitened thought.
Fantastic, scarce deserving of respect.
Good in its time, albeit ; no man may scorn
These early efforts of the laboring mind ;
The bird must flutter ere it fly, the child
Must creep ere it can run, and brooding dream
Ever precedes distinct and definite thought.
All honor to our brothers of the past,
Who through the morning mists worked to the light,
Unconscious that a brighter day would shine,
Heroic were their labors in their time,
But pusillanimous and most pitiful
The work of current teachers, who would fill
Their places, and would have the world believe
God spake to these alone, to these alone
Gave knowledge of his attributes and laws,
Or lawlessness, for such the records shew,
Reporting truly their barbaric age,
And these reactionary modern priests,
These purblind jailers of the human soul,
These would-be dwellers in the caves of night,
With proud assumption of authority,
Give forth false dogmas of the unknown God.

Tell tales incongruous of his universe,
Strain truth to fit their inconsistencies,
And strike dissentients dumb with solemn phrase—
'For proof repair ye to the sacred books.'
Alas, the sacred books are no avail !
No satisfaction can they now supply
To souls that have outgrown them. Restless minds
We see on all sides, sceptics, rising up,
Who sow the seeds of discord, and the priests,
No more the spirit's leaders, make lament,
But naught can do to heal the torn land.
The breath of liberty is in the air :
Like to a giant laboring in his sleep,
The world is struggling for the better life.
Across the earth we see pale phantoms flit,
Mere ghosts they seem of beauty, virtue, truth ;
Yet are these heralds of the better time.
New sects arise amid hoarse tumult's roar,
And order flees affrighted. Hope is none
Or help from teachers of the ancient church,
Who, in their shells of formula and rule,
Amazed behold the quickening of the spirit,
And cling the closer to the kingly power.
Thus superstition lends the tyrant aid,
And by the tyrant still is bolstered up.
Even now the spectacle of murdered France
Across my vision flashes—France, whose streets
Ran blood, while Death, in hideous carnival,
A ghastly shape rode on the lurid air.
Old age and infancy are equal prey,
Flung on his altar with inhuman zeal.
In vain does Pity plead and weeping Love
Turn eyes of longing toward his vacant shrine.

Shall there be more such scenes? Shall England next
See this strange satyr-shape colossal rise
And pass with power satanic down her streets—
This mongrel phantasm, horribly begot
Of superstition old and knowledge new,
Half-knowledge, crazing men twixt false and true?
One mighty effort and she may be saved :
For God's new revelation unto man
Fling wide the doors and windows of the soul ;
And, in obedience to the law divine,
Reach ever nearer to his hand unseen.
This is my plan : France now hath ruler new :
Good we may deem him, since so great and strong,
And in the Western world a son of light,
One of that glorious constellation which
There heralded the dawn, now doth preside.
With him have I held converse ; oft in France
He passed with me long hours of earnest talk
Upon our mutual hopes and fears for man.
No friend is he of the barbaric creeds
That dwarf the Eternal to a Jupiter,
Who nods and frowns, with senile fancies puffed,
Who hurls his crackling bolts among mankind,
Dooming to endless woe who thwart his will,
Creating and unmaking worlds of men.

(A bell rings.)

To these two rulers of two modern lands
That nearest stand to freedom will I go,
And thus before them will I plead my cause,
The cause of that fair human Spirit I know,
Of all earth's sons who toil and have no hope—

*(The door opens and ALBERT STRANGE enters, but
seeing visitors, is about to retire.)*

ST. J. What, Albert Strange ! Come in, Albert !
come in !

ALB. I fear my presence is an interruption :
I came supposing you to be alone.

*(He bows to CORNELIA, who does not observe him,
her eyes being fastened upon COROT.)*

ST. J. O no—no interruption—not at all !
These are two friends of mine, philosophers
From sunny France, come over sea to see me—
Monsieur Gustave Corot, Monsieur Edmond Corot,
Monsieur Albert Strange.

*(The gentlemen bow. EDMOND and ALBERT walk
apart and converse.)*

COROT. *(Who has not resumed his seat.)*
With your permission we might now reserve
Further discussion of our plan till night.
The propositions I have to submit
Affect the operation of the scheme
For which I hope success.

ST. J. We are much interested.

(Exeunt ST. JOHN, COROT and CORNELIA.)

ALB. And you will come ?

ED. The prospect you hold out
Is so delightful that I shall not fail.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V.

A lawn in SIR EDWARD STRANGE'S grounds. To the East a small grove of acacias, palms, and other ornamental trees and shrubs. Rustic seats—two of which are occupied by ALICIA MAYNARD and WINIFRED ST. JOHN. They are but a few rods distant from the house, the South wall of which rises before them covered with ivy.

ALL. Whistle it off, Winona ! Think no more
Of these heart-breaking isms and osophies.
You are too young to touch such mouldy themes ;
They smell o' the graveyard and the charnel house.
Leave grey-beards to their ashes and dead leaves
Of musty tomes, that have nor life nor joy.
The junior loves now play about your path,
Strewing roses such as only wait on youth.
Come, come, I'm glad to see you smile at last !
Although your eyes have still a tender sadness.

WIN. I am not sad, Alicia, only musing ;
Nor do I mean to darken youth's bright hour
With wishing for what fate must still withhold.
To-day I have been thinking of my father.—
I seemed to hear his eloquent, strong voice,
And in deep tones he pictured all the woe
That now afflicts the suffering human race,
The major part of which goes down to death,
Lacking the knowledge that doth help to live,
And led by leaders who themselves are blind.
Thus have I heard him speak a thousand times,
And then Cornelia came, and took the chair
Beside him which he thought I might have filled,

His loving pupil and devoted friend.
But my thoughts were elsewhere ; for when he spoke
Of steadfast purpose and unselfish work
To help men onward to a nobler life,
Though I did love him for his generous speech.
And long'd to aid him in the way he wished,
I scarce could comprehend ; and looking forth
Through the wide window, where the vines grew thick,
But not so thick as to shut out the sky
And swaying branches of the green-robed trees,
Where birds were leaping in and out at play.
I seemed a shadow in a gloomy vault,
My father's voice far-off as in a dream.
And all my longing was to reach the sun.
To see and know the joyous world without.

ALL. And well it was you did, Winona *mia* !
What, pray, have we to do with this wise nonsense ?
The world is as God made it, and for me
Is full of beauty, love and life and joy.
Should Venus, dressed in drab, go spinning flax ?
Or dancing Hebe, with the dimpled cheek,
Sit down and weep because the gods love nectar.
And do not labor to improve the race ?
Let that impassioned lady, Miss Minerva,
Be welcome to the wisdom of your father :
Our wisdom only is to make men love us.
Tell me how many lovers you have had.

WIN. Not one.

ALL. Not one ! What, not a little one ?
A sugar lad, with painted, carmine cheeks,
Whom, when your passion ended, you might eat,
Biting his head off, with a dainty sigh
That love should not be made of sterner stuff ?

Or have you not, on frosty winter morns,
Yielded your heart's fine perfume to some boy
With apple cheeks, who, whistling, trudged to school,
Kicking the snow before him as he went ?
I have loved many such. But say, Winona !
Has not your cousin stirred a warmer feeling
Than his mere consinship has right to claim ?

WIN. What ! Albert ?

ALL. Yes : I think he loves you.

WIN. You mean you think my cousin is in love.
And so think I, but with another maiden :
One that you wot of, who wears saucy curls,
Long lashes, and a pair of bright brown eyes,
That can look roguish or so very serious.

ALL. I do not mind the lady. Yet you say
I know her. Do you mean by reputation ?

WIN. Her reputation's good, no fleck upon it :
Though its true quality you do not know.
And yet, within the hour, she smiled upon you
From out your chamber mirror.

ALL. What, pretty Nance !
Why surely 'tis not she—so much below him ?

WIN. Yes, pretty Nance ! a very pretty Nance !
Quite shrewdly have you guess'd. Ah, here he comes :
Now will I impudently question him
If you have not guessed true.

ALL. Dare to, and I shall scream !

(*Enter ALBERT.*)

ALB. I come, fair ladies, all with travel stained.
Nor waited to remove the dust and grime
Ere placing in your hands these several parcels,
Which prove how faithfully my memory serves

When you do graciously command its duty.
'This, cousin, is your new poet's latest book.
This scroll, Miss Maynard, is your wished-for music—
Which still I hope to hear.

ALI. Oh, thanks !

WIN. Thanks for the book.

But listen to this simple verse I find
On turning the first page, 'Tis of a maid,
Heard at her window singing :— (Reads.)

*Sing on, sweet bird ! A bird I hear
Now in my own heart singing :
He made his nest there yestereve.
Ah, list his joy-notes ringing !*

*Yon April sun is shining there ;
Yon April sky is bending ;
White clouds float in the lucent air,
Soft wreaths of vapor blending.*

*Ah, Love ! Love ! Love ! his name is Love !
He came but yestereven ;
And ever since that song of his
Has flooded the wide heaven.*

*It would not let me sleep last night :
I rose when day was breaking.
The sun, a swimmer strong, appeared,
Night's billows from him shaking.*

*He rose in flame : he lit the blue :
The earth hung in his splendour ;
And there, within, a wonder grew,
A new world, strange yet tender,*

*Broad as the light, clear as the sky.
Then sweet and clear the singing :
Untill for joy I sang myself,
Our voices, as one, ringing.*

*The April sun is shining there,
The April sky is bending ;
White clouds float in the tucent air.
Soft wreaths of vapor blending.*

*And Love ! Love ! Love ! his name is Love !
He came but yestereven :
Yet ever since that song of his
Has flooded the wide heaven.*

ALL. Yes : simple and slight.

ALB. Simple and sweet.

(Enter Servant.)

SERV. Her ladyship desires to speak with you,
When you have rested from your journey, sir.

ALB. Say I shall join her presently.

(Exit Servant.)

WIN. But tell me, Albert, have you seen my father ?
And seemed he lonely for his graceless daughter,
Who, selfishly on pleasure bent, could leave him,
Companion'd round by dreary walls of books,
And waited on by servants ?

ALB. Yes, I saw him :
He seemed quite happy — sent his tender love,
With wishes that the country air might bring
Back to your paling cheeks their former roses.
I broke upon a conclave in his room,
But ere I could withdraw he raised his head.

And, seeing, hailed me forward. With him were
Two strangers—Frenchmen—of the name of Corot.
A father and his son. With them Miss Howard,
Convened to talk of some momentous matter,
A philosophico-religious project
To change the face o' the world. The younger man,
Who, though a Frenchman, is of comely presence,
And a frank, open bearing, I have asked,
Should leisure and his disposition serve,
To quit the smoke of London and come down
To take a peep upon our rustic ways
And see our English gardens.

WIN. What said he?

ALB. That to do so would please him much :
He but accompanied his father hither
Without a personal purpose,—so the days,
My invitation wanting, might lag heavily,
And he would gladly come.

ALL. Pray heaven he may not prove an arrant flirt !
One of your gay Parisians, whose smile kills
At twenty paces ; one with fierce mustachios,
Who guards his honor with his rapier point,
Who frowns at every gallant he may meet
And ogles every lady.

ALB. You shall see.

ALL. Well, I must to my music.

ALB. And I to my mother.

[*Exeunt.*—WINIFRED follows, turning the pages
of her book.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Evening. A balcony overlooking a garden, at the rear of ST. JOHN'S house in London. Enter CORNELIA HOWARD, followed by EDMOND COROT. CORNELIA sinks into an arm-chair, and EDMOND, after glancing for a moment at the sky and the adjacent roofs, draws a chair to the balustrade, sits down and, leaning forward, gazes into the little garden.

COR. How well to be a man !
He on life's various stage may play his part,
And, with a part to play, may fearlessly
Climb to the topmost level of his act,
Not so a woman. Fate hath wall'd her in,
And chain'd her down to common household cares.
Her duties are marked out, nor may she dare
Attempt a loftier part than that which falls
Within her lot's small circle. No seven acts,
Nor seven ages, her's—she hath but two,
The married and unmarried.

ED. (*Rousing himself.*) Pardon me.
But in these two grand acts what various scenes
Of maidenhood and sweet maternal ways,
What power, enchantment, glory. What fair spheres,
Wide as the heaven's champaign, to o'ersway,
And, like the heaven's white queen, as crescent first,
To draw men's eyes with nameless maiden charm,
And then to reign, in beauty's rounded orb,
Controller and bright empress of their fate.

COR. You use the language of mere courtesy.
And, when I cry that women suffer wrong,
Would stop my mouth with phrase of compliment :
Smooth tinkling sounds, with wreaths of vapor ring'd,
The wonted offerings to a flattered sex,
Who pay the expected smile, and change the subject,
Foreseeing disaster should they longer dwell
On themes so unfamiliar.

ED. Wrong me not
By thinking that I hold in slight esteem
The woman's cause, or speak in idle jest.
I ever would look on the sunny side :
And, with this optimistic bias, see
Women with men the walls of darkness storming,
And, side by side, advancing to one end.

COR. What end ?

ED. Ah, there you ask too much. How can I say ?
Who knows ? Not I, nor yet my father wise.
For though, by what I hear, you seem to think
His wisdom a bright lamp that dims the sun,
The end doth rest in darkness and will rest.

COR. The end, I hope, is happiness to all,
To all the suffering sons of human kind :
This does your father think, and so do I.

ED. O yes, this is an end ; there have been others,
And each in turn hath become a mean
To some remoter good.

COR. This one is final.
And doth provide for all. In happiness,
In adaptation to environment,
In happy movement with according law,
Man finds at last solution and repose,
The riddle's working out and 'scape from pain.

ED. Yes, I have heard the tale. It is not old,
 Nor yet so new but that one may have learn'd it,
 Man needs adjustment to his terrene home,
 And 'tis by law decreed that this shall come :
 The longer he shall live upon this ball
 The better it shall snit him ; since even now
 It spins him safely o'er the azure fields,
 And progress may be seen on every side.
 Why, some few aeons hence, disease and crime,
 Those discords in the earth's fine organ chant
 Unto her sister spheres, will have been still'd,
 And peace and love, twin seraphs, purely robed,
 Shall minister to a world wrapped in bliss,—
 I think this is the picture ?

COR. No, not quite—
 A pencil sketch—but it is something like.
 ED. And call you this an end worth looking for ?
 Good is it, but good only as a mean.
 Oh no ! no rest is here, no problem solved ;
 Death still will travel with these sons of men.
 Nor can they dress him up to look more fair
 By making love perpetual resident.
 Though all war else were quelled, between these two,
 Love now grown strong, a fiercer feud must rage,
 Not here the treaty, the white flag of truce,
 And after-friendship. O no, never here !
 Behind the veil Love may clasp hands with Death,
 But never on this planet.

COR. You talk well :
 And what you say seems true. Do you not, then,
 Go with your father and our other friends ?
 Have you no care for the great scheme's success
 That shews so much of promise ?

ED.

More, I fear.

Of promise than fulfilment. Feverish haste
Runs to its own undoing. All must wait.
My father builds too much on this new plan ;
Nor can I think he brings to its inspection
That wisdom which he owned in earlier years,
Ere his fine mind had dropped its noblest fruit.
To me it seems more like a frenzied dream
Than sober, clear perception of mid-day.
(Granted he should succeed, and these two kings
Should take his theory to make it practice,
(In fancy we may grant it) then begins
Its painful operation on the people,
The slow, long stages of mere mental growth.
All precious growths ask time : and to conceive
Adoption by a president or king
Of this or that true, perfect rule of life
Shall magically bring the reign of peace,
And make a perfect people, smacks of madness.
Could father Time give our poor earth a fillip
And send it forward some ten thousand years,
Or might he cram the epochs into hours,
Or, by strange process of exotic heat,
Mature to mellowness a half-ripe fruit,
Then might we have millenium.

COR. So you are not a friend.

ED. A friend I am, and therefore, no fanatic.
My father and the modern men are right,
This I believe ; but they expect too much,
And so I see are doomed to disappointment.
Their noble work has my full sympathy,
Would I could help them further than they hope ;
And though their lives shall fail, their work will live.

COR. Yes.—This it is that fills my soul with longing
To be among the workers : there to spend
What life is mine in labors that live on.
And hence you hear me grumble that my sex
Forbids all outward effort.

ED. A Power beyond our will controls events :
It brought us hither and will take us hence :
Let us with faith live out our transient lives,
Content to trust ourselves and our souls' needs
To their sole Author. He forever lives.
In all the maxims of the wisdom-mongers
I know no fairer word than this, SUBMISSION.

COR. We women know it well.

ED. And sometimes so do men.
But come, you're weary of philosophy ! (*Rising* .
The air blows freshly, and the twinkling stars
Mock at us through this thick Egyptian dusk.
I have a fancy that, above you smoke,
A row of solemn sphinxes sit, withdrawn,
Among the wafts of cloud and wandering beams,
Who peer, with anxious gaze fixed on this house,
Dreading their secret shall ere morn be known,
Such wisdom is now gathered in its walls.

COR. They have come back. I hear your father's voice:
Perhaps we should descend and hear them talk.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The same. ST. JOHN'S library. ST. JOHN and CORNELIA, who are seated, listen attentively to GUSTAVE COROT, who walks to and fro, now and then coming to a stand while he talks.

COROT. So clear the working is, the way so plain,
None surely can misdoubt it.

ST. J. Reforms you know need time.

COROT. Ah, so they do, but here the time is ripe :
All is so fit : occasion and the hour,
For once, stand face to face. With us must rest
The fair accomplished fact to usher in
By meeting of these twain. There in the West
Is Jefferson, Buonaparte in the East.

ST. J. But will they take it up ?

COROT. We can but try,
Yet have I faith when they do hear my plan
They will attempt it gladly. This the plan is,—
These men, emancipated from the thrall
Of self and superstition, must embrace it.
America most readily will accept
A teaching that is level with the time.
Still young, and with youth's free and daring heart,
She can ideals realize :

'Tis but to change the system, pour new wine
Into new bottles, for all there is new.
Where now are churches, schools, for inculcation
Of musty doctrines, long since proven void,
The churches, schools, will stand ; but there, in lieu
Of superstitious, stale observances,
Life will be taught : the beautiful, the true,

Will there have worship ; all that is divine,
As being the highest in our human thought,
Will there have homage due. The life of man,
The wonders of our earth, the starry scheme,
Shall have due recognition, due account.
'Tis but to change the teachers in the schools,
To change the preachers in the tabernacles,
To study Nature where they study—mist,
Science to teach, and not theology,
Humanity to know, and not divinity ;
For through sweet human love we reach to God.
And only those who love shall see His face.
Who helps man then helps God ; man is God's child,
And knowledge of Him only can we have
Through knowledge of His creature. Grand results
I look for hence. When in the Western land
The preachers shall be teachers of the truth,
The race will take new strides, and a fresh youth,
Fairer than that of Greece, will flush its cheek,
France will not lag behind—she never will.
More difficult for her 'twill be to wrest
The power, so long misused, from sycophants
That fatten on the people, whom they claim
Their office is to guide to saintly life.
But this too may be done. A mighty hand
Is his who now leads France. Let him but see
A richer civilization, happier state
For man, waits at the door and lists his voice.
And he will cry, Come in, and fling it wide.
Then will the sun of Science shine for France,
Then will America and she advance
Even to the consummation of our hopes,
And soon will England follow.

Be needed, I, for one, am well prepared
To perish for the truth I would see triumph.

COR. In my heart your words find perfect echo.

COROT. I talk of sacrifice, but none is needed.
True work and faith—no more do we require ;
And these are furnished free. I see the change
Within a hundred cities,—Churches then,
Instead of being shunned houses all the week,
And entered sadly one day in the seven,
Shall be of multitudes the meeting places.
Whatever can make happy or make wise
Shall there be freely taught ; the tale divine,
Interpreted by scholars, nature-skilled,
The stories written in the stars, the rocks,
The plants, the elements whereof we breathe,
And chiefest man—so reaching up to God,
From whom we draw our being.

ST. J. At least you know whereof you speak.

COROT. It hath me in its grasp, friends, is my life.
Even as a gambler, almost at an end,
Doth stake his all upon some mystic turn
He thinks he sees i' the dice, and sure to win.
So I, desiring perfect human lives,
And by my magic well-informed, will stake
My all upon this cast.

ST. J. If you should lose, mankind will still be gainer.

COROT. O we shall win. Success sits on our banners.
Since 'tis but to o'erturn a rotting pile,
To thrust the unworthy from the seats of honor,
To take from the incompetent and give
Unto the capable—what should be easier ?

[Here EDMOND COROT enters, and silently takes a chair.
His father resumes his seat, and a discussion ensues
concerning matters of practical detail.]

SCENE III.

A Park. Westminster Bridge in the distance. ALBERT STRANGE, EDMOND COROT and CORNELIA HOWARD approach along a walk. Arrived at a shady spot where there are seats, CORNELIA sinks into one and the others follow her example.

ED. Here have we Eden, with its flowers, its birds,
Green leaves, green grass, cool shadows and gold sheen.
Blue, limpid sky, and tinkling waterfalls,
And, what they lacked in Eden, yon dense throng.
Tumultuous, rushing, turbulent, reckless, loud,
To make the contrast fairer.

ALB. Yes : from here
We just can glimpse the distant, surging sea,
Crested with heads—hats, bonnets, colors gay,
Bright in the sunny glare. A holiday
In London gives a chance to see strange fashions.

COR. It is a motley crowd, and worth the watching.
Poor parched and stunted souls and meagre frames,
How gladly do they issue from their dens
To bask an hour in sunshine, care-oblivious.
These oases in the deserts of their lives
How eagerly they touch, and that which men
Should have as common right from first to last,
Should take as calmly as a draught of drink,
They greedily do snatch at.

ALB. They are not so miserably off. It seem'd to me
Most of them were quite happy.

COR. Did you scan
Their faces ?

ALB. But carelessly, I grant,

And yet I saw much jolly mirth and pleasure.

COR. Such pleasure as you'd share?

ALB. Indeed, I seemed
To share it fully. Once I heard a laugh,
A huge guffaw, as we came through the crowd,
And, turning, saw a burly, red-faced burgher,
Surrounded by a crowd of happy dames.—
These echoed, with such rippling lilt and trills,
His merry shout, that I too, laughed to hear them.

COR. Think of the squalor, crime, the vicious lives,
The ever-running sore of populous London ;
The hideous tenements in courts and lanes,
The dwarfed, deformed shapes that issue thence,
The human caricatures, the brutish men,
The sickly, loathsome women, the sad babes,
Born to a heritage of infamy.

ALB. Yes ; that is horrible.

COR. It is not all :
This is a wound, an ever-present pain ;
This stings and rankles, this makes blind and mad.
But there are all the dull, grey lives beside,
The so-called thriving laborers and mechanics
Who toil from week's beginning to week's end,
Like insects building up the social state,
Whose only happiness is to eat and sleep,
Who die without a glimpse of better things—
That larger view which is life's best to give,
And who, at last, incorporate with the soil,
Forever lie forgotten and unknown.

ED. You look too much on this—'Tis true, too true,
Yet this is but one side—the darker side.
This is dense shadow, with no hint of sun ;
And you must know there are some glints of sun-line

Even in the darkest lives.

COR. Sunshine, you say !
I should not call it sunshine, star-shine rather,
A starry glimmer in a night-black sky—
Or some of those swift, phosphorescent gleams
That flicker o'er a ghastly, noisome swamp,
Where fever breeds and horrid monsters crawl.

ALB. O this is morbid !

COR. Nay ; change places with them.
And see how much of sunshine you will have.
Give up your walks, your drives, your pleasant books,
Your music, pictures, sweet companionships,
Your thoughts, your dreams, your idle reveries,
Your choice which pleasure shall be for the night,
Which for the morn, and which for afternoon.
In lieu of this, that to you stands for life,
Take on another self, a hateful self,—
A slimy snake, a jackal, a hyena,
A spirit that loves night, a beast of prey,
Haunt those pest-ridden homes, consort with thieves,
Rejoice in practices your soul holds vile,
Become that other man, that human creature,
And live his awful life for one short hour,—
Then say if you have not been in a swamp,
Where fevers breed and horrid monsters crawl.

ALB. Why should I do all this ? One monster more
Would make one normal human life the less.

COR. I would not have you stay. You should come out,
And shake the nightmare from you : yet the ordeal
Would leave you scarce the same. You'd share, methinks,
What you are pleased to call my morbidness.

ALB. And to what end ? If fate to me be kind,
Were't not ingratitude to spurn her gifts ?

What should the others gain by my discomfort?
Some should be happy, if but to keep up
The standard, and excite, as did my burgher,
A pleasant thrill to shew that mirth is good.
'Twere pity if we lost the savor of it.

COR. A greater to forget by what 'tis purchased,
And lose the sense of pity.

Ed. Sympathy

Is beautiful, but should have many windows.
If you look only on the woes of life,
Life then is bitter—bitter past endurance.
A soul so tried grows sensitive and raw.
But life has joys past counting. The unhappy,
The truly miserable, who would fling
Its burden from them, are a very few.
The meanest grub that creeps still finds some good.
Life hath its mysteries—evil is but one,
And lessens steadily.

Cor. While evil lives
A tender soul cannot know happiness.

ED. A morbid cannot. Happiness is life :
And who lacks happiness lacks also force
To war with evil strongly. Joy is right.
Evil we extirpate to give joy place :
What folly, then, if for a little evil,
We steep in gloom the large joy that we have.

COR. Not large for me.

Ed. Come out into the sun.
You think too much. Thought is a tyrant master,
And men grow thin and pale who are his slaves.
Go see the children play, the lambkins leap,
The fountains sparkle in the noon-day beam ;
Go see the flowers bloom, the waters smile ;

Go hear the songs of birds among the trees,
The light breeze whispering to the happy leaves.—
Sweet influences these that make for joy,
Think not on life as though you were its doctor.
Or, if you must, why be as doctors are,
In sheer self-preservation, somewhat callous.

COR. You would not have me live as worldlings do?

ED. The worldlings have some wisdom on their side.
So have the birds and children. That which most
We long for we should strive for, and, for me,
The sweetest wisdom is to look on life—
That tragic, comic, never-ending play ;
That picture rich in color ; that high music,
Crossed by a thousand discords ; that strange web,
Where piteous histories of defeat and loss,
And gorgeous pageants of proud-stepping triumph
Are curiously inwoven ; where so oft
The loser is the gainer, and who wins
Is covered with disaster ; that stone sculpture,
For though the thing that we call life seems fluid,
Still hurrying to and fro, as chance directs,
'Tis an effect in marble, wrought by fate.
Thus might it be, thus only.—This to see,
And, studying, wonder at, for me is wisdom.

COR. Yet you would have men good.

ED.

Al! yes !

I'd have men more than good, I'd have them thorough.
I'd have them go beyond the strife for good ;
I'd have them go beyond their gods in beauty,
To be good should be easy as to breathe.
Think you we must have ever moral preachers—
Policemen, sheriffs, bendles, judges, spies ?
I look for perfect men—good is a mean ;

Goodness is moral health. When men are whole,
Complete in brain, in heart and in physique,
The perfect Christian and the perfect Greek,
Why then, mayhap, we shall commence to live.

ALB. (*Awaking.*) A pair of lecturers.

ED. You heard us not ;

You were away. But there is much to come.

ALB. (*Starting up.*) I shall not listen. I endure no more.

You stream I see has thinn'd, the roar is less ;
The shadows of the trees grow long apace,
And, since you have converted one another,
This lady now looks bright, and you look solemn,
A half-hour since, you smiled and she was serious,
Why there is nothing more to stay for here.

COR. Monsieur Corot turns all things topsy turvy.

What is is well and what is not is well.

'Twere good if men were good, but since they are not,

He's willing to have patience till they be.

'*Whatever is is right,*' his words imply,

And that good-nature is I'll not deny.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

An open space in SIR EDWARD STRANGE'S grounds.

Enter from some trees WINIFRED ST. JOHN, ALICIA

MAYNARD, ALBERT STRANGE and EDMOND COROT.

ALB. Shall you ride to hounds to-morrow, cousin ?

ALI. Yes, cousin—oh ! (*Glancing at Winifred.*)

ALB. You will need to rise betimes.

ALI. O yes. The morning and I are old friends. She gives me her first smile each day stepping across the meadow yonder.

ALB. I had not thought you had met.

ALI. Winifred, too, follows the yelping pack.

ALB. And Monsieur Corot ?

ED. Yes, I shall gladly join the chase :

Much have I heard and often of its charms,
That woo you English from your sleep-soft beds,
To shake the diamonds from the curled grass
And ride at level with the flaming day

ALB. It is a manly sport.

ALI. To hunt a panting creature to the death ?

WIN. Oh, it is cruel !

ALB. O do not say so ! how cruel ?

WIN. To be pursued for life and run to death,
To strain with starting eyes and quaking breast,
To hear the bloody, mouthing mob behind,
The rush, the steady gaining step by step,
The steady losing on each flagging leap,
And then the hot fierce breath, the snarl, the cry,
And all at once the hunted wretch hath turned,
A world of terror in his cowering shape,
The dogs have shot too far, he starts again,
The infernal torture doth again begin
He staggers, rushes blindly, rises, falls,
Until, at last, the simple fool, forespent,
Can go no further, and the horrid pack
With one mad swoop infix their awful fangs,
And from his quivering frame the life goes out.

ED. This is the pleading of the hunted one :
You do translate its pangs to human speech.

ALB. But this it does not feel. The deer or fox
Hath no such sense of pain as human kind.
My cousin puts herself before the hounds ;
And her's alone the anguish of suspense

And torn life outgushing—

ALL. Has then a deer no nerves?

ALB. Nerves doubtless has it, but not those of woman.

Dully it feels, with no electric thought
To quicken sensibility, and swell
(As in man's boding mind) a mere pin-prick
Into a gaping sword-thrust.

ALL. Where got you all this lore? What raw young
fox,

Of consequences careless, led you up
To these same wise conclusions?

WIN. O, I am sure their torment is as keen
As ours can ever be. I mind me well
The very last time that I rode to hounds.
I came in at the death, and, through the crowd
Of men and horses pressing to the front,
I gazed upon the scene. Within a cleft,
The square-cut angle of a wall of rock,
By sun and breeze embrowned and thatched with green,
A noble antlered stag lay on his side,
The proud head fallen o'er a jagging rock.
And, even as I came, it gave a moan,
And, with a little struggle, raised its head
And looked once sadly out upon the crowd.
Such piteous dumb woe its face expressed,
My heart grew heavy and my eyes did fill,
Surrounded there by wrangling dogs and men,
With me the poor thing's murderers.

ALL. Winona hath a gentle heart of mercy,
And for unfortunates a tender care.

ALB. To slay the gentle deer I grant seems harsh—
So winsome and so shy; but the red fox,
Supple and treacherous, we hunt to-morrow.

Alicia thinks so swiftly, and my father
 Seems to know everything that can be known.
 Perhaps I might think more if I felt less.
 Sometimes it seems enough of joy to be,
 And never think. I know I love to live—
 To take sweet pleasure in the sights of things
 And sounds. I love the sky, the fields, the woods,
 Evening and morning, and the midday too.
 When the great sun makes blaze the tingling sky.
 Then I love pictures more I think than all :
 They seem more wonderful than nature's self

Ed. I think you are a poet

Win. A poet,—O no, I cannot write.

Ed. Perhaps you have not tried.

Win. I cannot write

I know, but I can paint a little.

Ed. I said you were a poet.

Win. Yes? I said I could not write.

Ed. All poets do not write : some of them paint.
 Your pictures are a poet's I dare vouch.
 I pray you let me see them.

Win. O no ! I mean

I do not know,—perhaps another time.

You have not told me yet about your father.

Nor about France, nor how our England suits you.
 With all the rest that you set out to tell.

Ed. Did I propose so much? I would prefer
 Hear you tell how your England should be suited :
 At Rome one should be Roman.

Win. Is your father

So very learned? more learned than my father—
 Perhaps you, too, are learned?

Ed.

Extremely so :

And yet, I hope, not dangerously.
This have I learned,—that life is very short.
That wisdom may be carried in small compass,
That to live wisely asks a rarer wit
Than wisely not to live.

WIN. Doubtless you are wise.

(ALBERT and ALICIA coming up behind.)

ALL. A very owl for wisdom, be assured.
And yet, I think not so : meseems 'tis I,
I who am owlish. Had you thought, Monsieur,
To find a witch here at your elbow's end ?

ED. An owlish witch ?

ALB. Or a witching owl ?

ALI. Why Albert—so very well ! You mock me, it
appears, and will not take my word,—so I shall leave in
dudgeon.

ALB. Ha ! ha ! ha !

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T III.

SCENE I.

SIR EDWARD STRANGE'S grounds. WINIFRED ST. JOHN,
*who is engaged with some needlework, is seated in
the shade of a tree.*—ALICIA MAYNARD *reclines on a
grassy mound near her. An open book lies beside*
ALICIA.

WIN. How happy seem those doves that circling go
Forever round and round above yon tower,—
Like pieces of white paper in the wind,
When strikes the sun upon their fluttering wings,
And then again they darken as they fly.

ALL. Yes, tiresomely happy in their tireless flight.
It wearies me to watch them.

WIN. Me it soothes.
I love to sit like this, with half-shut eyes,
And while the sun shines freshly on the grass,
And drowsy zephyrs stir the languid flowers,
That, leaning, shed their perfume, see them chase
In wild career through the blue, unsmirched air.

ALL. Heigh-ho !

WIN. See now they scatter, group,
disperse,

Again together come, descend, arise,
Now birds, now paper torn in handfuls.

ALL. Heigh-ho ! Letters mayhap, love-letters, tost
From out Olympus by some recreant god.
When gods prove false how should mere men prove true ?
What think you of young Edmond ?

WIN. Monsieur Corot ?

ALL. The same. I note how fast your friendship ripens.

WIN. We are indeed good friends.

ALL. Good friends indeed :

And on such short acquaintance.

WIN. He understands

So easily all my thoughts, if thoughts they be.

His mood is so responsive. It is strange.

He scarcely seems a Frenchman.

ALL. Very strange !

Strange ! Strange ! Strange !

WIN. Why harp you on the word ?

ALL. It hath a friendly sound.

WIN. A hospitable one.

ALL. That it should so fall out.

WIN. That what should so fall out ?

ALL. You mind the gypsies.

WIN. O yes !

ALL. I see you had forgot them, by your blush

WIN. I mind you cared not for your fortune

ALL. How liked you yours ?

WIN. I did not think much of it.

ALL. Strange ! Strange ! Strange !

WIN. What is so strangely strange ?

ALL. O, nothing. And so you forgot your happy fortune. Have you not thought of it since ?

WIN. It has crossed my mind.

ALL. They did not prophesy so badly.

WIN. In what respect ?

ALL. O marry come up ! as the poets say. Hath not Monsieur Corot risen in answer thereto ? Doth he not match, point for point, with your predicted lover ?

WIN. O Alicia !

ALL. O Winifred ! I have something to confess.

(She arises and sits beside WINIFRED.)

WIN. To confess ?

ALL. Young Master Strange has said something.

WIN. Albert ?

ALL. Yes.

WIN. O Alicia ! I am so glad !

(She takes ALICIA'S hands, who looks into her eyes, smiling.)

WIN. Happy Alicia.

ALL. Happy Albert !

WIN. Happy Albert—happy Alicia. I am so glad.

ALL. O yes, it is not a crying matter. The young man seems gratified.

WIN. And you ?

ALL. I, as you see, conceal my mortification with slight embarrassment. It is very pleasant. You must make haste.

WIN. Make haste ?

ALL. To make some one as happy as I have made Albert.

WIN. Oh.—No.

ALL. O yes. I hoped you were being asked to do so yesterday, when you two lagged behind the others. I turned in my saddle and, glancing back, saw you descending a hill through some trees, your horses with heads lazily drooped, and he bending down as if to catch your slightest whisper.

WIN. We did but loiter to enjoy the evening.

ALL. He looks as noble as the gypsy promised—and you are rich.

WIN. Alicia, he's a stranger; and in a little while will go away.

ALL. Nay, let him not. One sees he's fond already. And truly worthy. 'Tis a lovely pair—two lovely pairs. Yes, he's in-leed true gentle. Albert is jealous, I have praised him so. But he's so good and kind.

WIN. Monsieur Corot?

ALL. (*Singing.*)

Gather roses, pink and white,

No, Albert—

(*Singing.*)

Weave them in a coronal,

Yet he's not a whit more kind
And good than is this gentleman from France.

(*Singing.*)

*Twined with ladies' tresses bright,
Valley-lilies, champions small,
Set 'mid ivy leaves so green—
Scarlet berries shew between.*

*Win your love to mossy nook,
Where doth spread a shady tree,
And doth wind a merry brook
Past a daisy-sprinkled lea :
Crown her there your queen for aye—
All in sport and happy play.*

WIN. You would not have me go to France to live.

ALL. No, surely, since your count would lose his head.

(Singing.)

*She will pout and look aside,
Say your queen she may not be.
Mind her not, e'en if she chide,
All her thoughts you cannot see.
Draw to yours her rosy cheek—
Kiss her first,—thereafter speak.*

You know he's banished. How should he return?
You shall dwell here in England, and we'll live
Together all the happy, happy years.

WIN. You dear Alicia, with your Spanish castles.

ALL. O no—an English one, solid and true.
No castles like our English !

WIN. You have one.
Be happy and content.

Ala. (*Singing.*)

From pink-white to crimson-red
In her cheek will change the rose,
Her blue eye would strike you dead,
Yet her anger quickly goes,
Cry her mercy, meekly bold,
Then you may her waist unfold,

Sweet, marry him !

An if you do not, Master Strange shall go—
About his business, and then I shall—die.

[*Reent, ALICIA singing.*]

*As the sky above the trees,
So her upward glance will shine,
See you not from smiles like these
How her heart is wholly thine?
Gaily tripping now ye wend—
Love's own sprites your way attend.*

SCENE II.

London. ST. JOHN'S Library. GUSTAVE COROT and ST. JOHN are standing near the open door. COROT, holding some small articles of luggage, is dressed as for a journey.

ST. J. You know my purse is yours. While you are gone
Draw from it freely ; it hath goodly depth.

COROT. Thanks, thanks.—I shall remember. What is needed
To serve our mutual interest, and which gold
Alone can forward, you shall be apprised.

ST. J. I gladly would go with you, but my presence
Would scarce assist the issue, and, just now,
I am required in England.

COROT. You shall see,
If all goes well, a happy man return.
Too strenuous, for some time, my life has been ;
Too much enwrapped in this, my dearest hope,
To find enjoyment in each passing day.

ST. J. Your look is somewhat haggard ; you need rest.
Be not so anxious. All will yet end well.

COROT. One effort more—but one strong effort more,
To shew the trend of things, the morrow's image.
These men in power must find in me a prophet
Who shall illuminate for them the possible,
And point convincingly the road to follow.

ST. J. You know that Jefferson is liberal-minded ?

COROT. I know him well ; what's right he'll surely do.
Even in the din of action, he, perchance,
Has vaguely visioned what I can make clear—

[*Exeunt conversing. CORNELIA enters, and glancing hurriedly about hastens after them.*]

SCENE III.

The drawing-room at SIR EDWARD STRANGE'S. Enter LADY STRANGE, EDMOND COROT and SIR EDWARD STRANGE. LADY STRANGE, who seems slightly agitated, talks with repressed excitement while she is crossing the room to a chair. EDMOND'S face wears a look of respectful attention as he seats himself. SIR EDWARD, after taking a turn to and fro and glancing through the window, also sits down.

LADY S. He may have reputation with the learned, Monsieur Corot—of this I cannot speak. I am a simple woman, unlettered and untaught. The voice of fame scarce reaches to us here, In this our country home. But say, can fame. Can fame, I ask, repay for friends estranged, Affection turned aside, for love repelled?

ED. Indeed, Madame, it can do no such thing ; I did not mention it in vaunting spirit. No doubt your brother can defend himself. The fact I cited, not as rich reward, But as, mayhap, affording some slight warrant That in the course Monsieur St. John has taken He is not all in error.

SIR ED. Not all in error ! I myself believe He is not all in error.

LADY S. Is he right ?
Then wherein is he right ? And, as for me, I must confess I know not what he thinks, When I have taxed him with irreverence, (They tell me he believes not in a God)
He smiles perplexingly, and puts me off

With some light jest about my own belief,
And will not give straight answer. Think you, sir,
He is an atheist?

ED. Surely, I think not.

LADY S. Believes he then in God?

ED. Surely, I think he does.

LADY S. Then what means this report comes to our
ears,

That he and certain others have in hand
To overturn the church, and take from men
Their faith in God and His true Word Revealed—
To plunge the nation into atheism?
Though, by God's help, they never can do this.
But that he should attempt it frets me sore.

ED. Indeed, I think they have no such intention.

SIR ED. Pooh! pooh! not they! Some philanthropic
scheme

I'll wager 'tis they work at—some Utopia,
Some No-Man's land they sail for. As you know,
St. John was ever dreaming.

ED. You, then, have read his books.

SIR ED. Not I!

LADY S. Nor I.

SIR ED. I never got beyond the first ten pages.
There baulked I and turned tail. I was as one
Who, having ventured some few steps within
A mighty forest, sees no path ahead,
And, turning, finds that there is none behind—
It was a fancied track between some trees
He thought a path. Then, fearing to go further,
Lest that all possible guidance he should lose,
Retreats and comes out on the hither side.
I like St. John, but care not for his books;

They are, for me, a forest to be shunned,
Seeing I lack a compass.

LADY S. They say that he rejects the holy Scriptures.

SIR ED. Oh, as to that, they say his mind's not clear.

LADY S. He doth deny their inspiration.

ED. Perhaps not quite so much. This does he claim,
As I have understood him : that the Bible
Contains high inspiration, as do books,
The works of poets of all lands and ages—
Of Greece, Rome, England, France, as of Judaea.

LADY S. This is flat sacrilege, as you can see,
To place the Book divine upon a level
With human effort, weak and unassisted.

ED. Yet this, or something like it, is his creed.
All human effort is divine he holds :
What is most nobly human's most divine,—
Indeed, he says not much of the Divinity.

LADY S. I fear him damn'd, beyond hope of redemption.

ED. Madam, I cannot think so.

SIR ED. Damn'd, do you say? He damn'd! I'faith
not he :

He's much too good a fellow to be damn'd.
Think you God makes such men to burn them up?
That were a waste of labor. Damn St. John!
'Tis no such easy thing to make good men—
For what should he be damn'd?

LADY S. If, as 'tis said,
He be a scoffing infidel, an atheist,
A free-thinker, a laughder in God's face,
How should he find forgiveness?

SIR ED. Oh, he is none of these. You do mistake.
He has been freely slandered. Well you know

He is a quiet English gentleman,
Though he have doubts of Moses.

LADY S. Doubts of Moses—

Sir Edward !

SIR ED. Yes, that is what they say.

But what of that? Now I believe in Moses.

But if another man cannot believe,

Shall I, post-haste, condemn him?

LADY S. These are fantastic freaks.

SIR ED. Shall I condemn him, say? Indeed I dare
not.

I judge not, trusting I may not be judged,

That is judged too severely, you observe.

Now, says St. John, the world is very old ;

It was not made six thousand years ago,

In fact it is a-making. Those six days

The Lord went in for world-mannufacture

Are a poetic fancy,—nothing more.

Though I do think St. John be greatly wrong

I would not therefore damn him.

LADY S. Sir Edward, you are flippant.

SIR ED. Nay, not at all. I only would explain
St. John's position, coupled with our need

For utmost toleration. Doubt he may,

(They say he doubts) the story of the rib.

I doubt it not, but let him have his doubt.

LADY S. He should not have his doubt in face of
Scripture.

Nor should you wish him have it. You, meseems,

Are strangely liberal with your right to doubt.

ED. You see Sir Edward fears the judgment day.

LADY S. I soon shall be in doubt what he believes ;
One should cleave to one's faith.

SIR ED. And so do I. I would not have him doubt :
I would that he believed as we believe.
But, if he cannot, there's an end.

LADY S. An end ; I fear a sad one.

SIR ED. Then there are other legends—truths I mean—
They say he calls them legends, but he's wrong.
The story of the woman and the snake,
The fruit forbidden and man's first sad fall,—
This finds he difficult to comprehend.
The more unhappy he. Had he our faith
It would come easy. See how you and I
Can understand all, having perfect faith.
You see, Monsieur Corot, he but lacks faith.

ED. Yes, Sir Edward, you make that quite clear.

LADY S. I pray you, if it please you, soon have done.

SIR ED. I faith I'm sorry for our friend, St. John.
His case is bad ; but that it is no worse
We may give thanks. I know that he doth say
Since God must well have known poor man would sin,
He should not then create a life, fore-doomed
For eating of an apple. This, I say,
Is rank presumption. Surely God had right
To do what heart desired with his own clay,
Clay that had once been nothing, not e'en clay.
Yet he may see his error.

LADY S. He believes
Man dies even as a dog, falls like a tree.
And, as a tree rots, so sinks to decay :
A fearful thought.

ED. I know it is not his.

SIR ED. 'Tis not so easy to come at his thought.
He may think differently of all these things,
And think in some sort rightly, yet not think

That which we think he thinks. And hence do I
Weakly attempt to show that, though quite wrong,
He may not be so bad.

LADY S. Not be so bad.
What do you mean, Sir Edward?

SIR ED. It is a wondrous story and a strange.
So wondrous is it that I'm sure 'tis true.
That awful tale of the embattled legions
Camped on the fields of heaven. What a war—
Now what a war was that! Immortal spirits
Shot through and through with fearful thunderbolts.
No petty shot and hail, but smokeless flashes,
With peal on peal, while the winged, deathless ones
Coursed hotly through the air: shot through and through.
Defeated but to rise,—the grandest fight
That e'er has been recorded. Stranger still
It ever should have ended. Now, St. John
Believes not this, yet I accept it fully.
What makes him doubt, but gives me firmer faith,
Its very strangeness.

LADY S. Will you now have done?
The girls, I see are coming.

(Enter WINIFRED and ALICIA.)

SIR ED. One moment. Then you see St. John makes
pause
About geography—shall we say geography?
The happy garden's true locality,
The site of hell, the heavenly palaces:
Since these he cannot find, at once he cries
Realities are figments, there's no such.
As if one should believe but what one sees.
My pride is to believe what is not seen.

But men are made diversely.

WIN. You're talking of my father.

SIR ED. Yes, my dear ;

He is a theme fruitful of interest.

LADY S. If you'll excuse me I shall now withdraw.

(She speaks to the young ladies, who follow her from the room.)

SIR ED. *(Rising and advancing to EDMOND.)*

Then there's the flood. The flood, I grant's a miracle.

He thinks not much of miracles—doubt again.

I like not drowning men myself, I say ;

The odds are had I lived then I should drown.

It seems unkind ; but who knows ? who can tell ?

Mayhap 'tis better we should drown—or burn.

They say the world shall be consumed by fire

The second time. Let's pray we may be shrouded,

Then can it only reach our senseless bones—

But ah ! the long hereafter.

ED. Dear Sir Edward, I fear you are not sound.

SIR ED. Sound to the core, my boy. Then there's the
Whale—

And Balaam, Balaam must not be forgot :

Samson and Joshua and all the rest.

To have the sun stand still on Ajalon

Or was't the moon ?) would smash, they say,

Would smash the solar system ; faith, they say

'Twould smash the universe ; it could not be.

But of the Eternal purpose what know they ?

Mere tinkers.

ED. I grant you they know little. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Yes. I rejoice to hear that you are sound.

SIR ED. Quite sound, but I have some imagination ;

Can take for the nonce another's point of view.
St. John is wrong, you know, yet—

ED. Ha ! ha ! ha !

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE IV.

Washington. A vestibule of the White House. Enter
COROT and GENTLEMAN, meeting.

COROT. A word, sir, if you'll pardon me—
Was he the president you parted from?

GENT. None other. See you now he comes this way.
If you'd have speech with him. accost him straight.

(*Exit gentleman.*)

COROT. He is the very same, not changed a whit.
I knew him at a glance.

(*Enter JEFFERSON, in easy indoor costume, and*
wearing slippers.)

JEFF. Why 'tis Monsieur Corot ! how do you sir ?
What happy wind has blown you to our shore ?
Come in ! come in ! Rejoiced I am to see you.
How left you all our friends ? This way—come in.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

A room in the White House. Enter JEFFERSON and COROT. JEFFERSON wheels COROT a large easy-chair, and busies himself opening the window-blinds, talking the while and listening to COROT.

COROT. "La Republique?" O yes, she lay in port ;
Now I remind me, we did see her passing.
No, I came over on the "Albatross."
You see I sailed from England, not from France ;
We had a stormy passage.

JEFF. From England ?
Do you reside there now ?

COROT. Ah, no indeed.
France is my home forever. I did visit
By invitation of an English friend.

JEFF. Then you can give me news of those in Paris,
When saw you Daubney ? Is he still the same—
Still swearing by Rousseau, and hoping men
Will yet return to Nature ? And Dubois ?
And poor Lapierre, with his eternal snuff-box,
When pressed hard in debate ? Do you still meet,
As in the days when we were first acquainted ?

COROT. No, not so often. Those were pleasant days.
Changes have happ'd since then. Dubois is dead.

JEFF. Dear, gay Dubois.—Your circle ill could spare
him

COROT. There is no circle now : we seldom meet.
We are grown old and sober.

JEFF. Old—and sober.
One cannot then, while growing old in years.
Stay young in feeling ?

COROT. If it can be done,
'Twere good to know the process.

JEFF. But yourself,
Come, tell me of yourself. Live you the same—
Still poring over books, still writing them?
You were not sober in those days back there.
You were enthusiastic, stout and bold.
When you began to talk we all fell silent.
At times to hear you was as good as wine :
Your thoughts were ever fresh, and seemed to tread
As on the brink of some discovery
You long had looked for. Have you found it yet?

COROT. A discovery.—I know of no discovery.
I have a plan.

JEFF. You have a plan?

COROT. Retain you still your old-time faith in men?

JEFF. Does that still wait for proof? That I am
here,

Placed here by men whom, trusting me, I trusted,
Would seem to prove it.

COROT. You now may help them vastly.

JEFF. I now may serve them truly.

COROT. Had I your power!

JEFF. It is a power committed.

COROT. This commonwealth's a star to guide the
nations.

JEFF. The same star shines for all—the star of
freedom.

COROT. It long hath shone, and freedom's yet to find.

JEFF. Our ship of state now steers in that direction.

COROT. Since you are pilot, steer the ship to port.

JEFF. The pilot is not captain. I obey
The captain's orders.

COROT. Who, then, is captain ?

JEFF. The people.

COROT. And ask they not for freedom ?

JEFF. They know but the direction, not the spot.

Far distant is the port and rough the sea,
Many the storms and perilous the rocks,
The good ship must encounter on her way.
Full oft must she put in to seek repairs.
No single pilot knows that sea : each guides
The short space that he knows, or thinks he knows.

COROT. You still hate superstition as of old ?

JEFF. With all my heart.

COROT. You now can crush its head.

JEFF. Can crush its head ?

COROT. Strange that you have not seen.

Yours is the power to free this generation,
Or if not this, the next, and clear the way
Unto a perfect manhood.

JEFF. Show me how.

COROT. Most willingly. From England have I come,
Remembering our long talks in former days.
And buoy'd by hope that you would now give ear,
And glad co-operation, to a scheme
Which has for object man's regeneration.

JEFF. Why Corot, this is strange.

COROT. You are surprised ?

JEFF. I do not understand. This sounds like cant.
And yet you are no charlatan.

COROT. Ah, I have not explained. When you have
heard

How simple is the way : when you have seen
How circumstances here, in this new land,
Lead up to my intent, you will not smile,

Or if you smile, 'twill be with satisfaction.

JEFF. Dear friend, I am prepared. Pray let me
hear

What is this way, this plan, this explanation.
This scheme which shall regenerate mankind,
Shall free men from the chains of superstition,
And which alone hath brought you over sea.
Say how can I assist you.

COROT. Rather say
How can you help yourself and the republic ;
Or the republic only and mankind.
Your race and mine are almost at an end.

JEFF. Then what is't you desire ?

COROT. O Jefferson !
You know how oft we two have been agreed
That for a thousand years the race of men
Have been brought up on error ; how, misled
From age to age, they still go on receiving
The same false education. Of themselves.
Of the divinity, of life and death,
And of the universe, filled with such strange,
Such monstrous notions as to poison joy,
To blind the eyes of knowledge, to enslave
In loathsome bondage man's aspiring soul.

JEFF. Yes this, unhappily, is all too true.

COROT. On crutches limp they when they might have
wings.

Burrow in earth when they should face the sun,
Leave all at hazard when the laws of life
Are clear to each who knows but that law is.
A Chinese wall they build to hedge them round.
In Chinese customs move they, shutting out
Science and thought and all that makes for progress.

JEFF. One day they'll level that same Chinese wall ;
Even now they punch holes through it.

COROT. What a time,
O what a time 'twill take, unless some man,
Gifted by heaven and trusted by the people,
Courageously shall level it himself.

JEFF. What mean you? .

COROT. Fate points to such as you—
Even to yourself. You are the destined man,
And this the nation destined to throw off
The loosening fetters from the human mind—
To start anew upon a grand career.

JEFF. Why, how may this be done?

COROT. By one bold act.

JEFF. You talk enigmas Corot.

COROT. And can solve them ;
You have as yet no church established here,
No priesthood dedicate to superstition ;
All is yet under ground ; nor weed, nor flower
Has yet appeared to claim the sun as right.
Put one strong effort forth, uproot the weeds,
And sow, instead, seeds that in some few years
Shall make a perfect people.

JEFF. I still am dark.

COROT. Still dark? You surely see what is my aim.
Allow no preachers to ascend your pulpits
Save those who shall teach truths of God and man.
Let fabled text-books of a barbarous age,
Accredited divine, be no more used.
Strip superstition of authority.
Place in your schools men well equipped to teach
Science,—the laws of nature and of life.
Laws moral, mental, social, laws divine.

The mighty arbiters of life and death.
Make way, in short, for that new, grander faith,
Which all men shall receive within its pale ;
That new Religion, which shall be a bond
Of brotherhood for all, and which shall teach,
However far we wander, we return
At last to God, the End and the Beginning.

JEFF. Why, this is very fine. But you propose,
If I do catch your meaning, such an act
As, were it in my power to perpetrate,
Would brand me tyrant for all time to come.

COROT. To place men on the path to perfect life,
And give them lamps to guide them surely on,—
Call you this tyranny ?

JEFF. To perfect life ?
To know the unknown path to that fair goal
Demands a perfect person. Are you such ?
I sadly must confess that I am not.

COROT. O Jefferson, you know this is to trifle.
One may see clearly where another errs.

JEFF. But if that other will not see, what then ?
Why, Corot, you are mad ! What should you do ?
Point out the way, then force him on before you,
And, if he struggle, kick him all the harder,
Crying. Wisdom dwells up yonder,—forward man !
Call you this liberty ? You surely jest.
Come, come, have done ! jest not with such sad seeming.

COROT. I do not jest. I am in fearful earnest.
Will you not, then, who seem one picked by fate,
Placed in the fore-front of a nation's life,
And favored by that nation, as by time,
By one brave act ensure her full success,
The noblest people that the sun hath seen.

JEFF. Dear friend, this is mere folly. See you not I lack the power to do the thing you wish? I am no autocrat, no master here. I stand here solely by the people's will. And carry out their wishes. Should I try To act on your suggestion, I should fail In loyal service to the sovereign head. However, personally, I incline To certain of your views, 'tis not for me To impose these views on men who care not for them. Friend, we must wait in hope the Almighty will ; When time is ripe for that majestic birth, A perfect state, 'twill not be you, nor I, Nor any man need usher it to being.

COROT. Then you will not act ?

JEFF. I cannot man !
Had I the power to do it, as I have not,
A thousand pens would damn the deed forever,
A thousand swords would leap to pierce it through,
The peaceful marts would be transformed to forts,
The pleasant meadows turned to camping grounds,
Where soldiers' fires would flare upon the night ;
'Twould start a revolution that would flash
Across the land like lightning.

COROT. Mayhap you do not yet quite understand.
Will you take time to think ?

(He rises sadly and moves toward the door.)

JEFF. My dear old friend !
What means all this ? Take 't not so hardly, man.
I need no time to think, but go not yet.
Come with me first. Since you have just arrived,
Why there are sights to see. This way old friend.

(That he should end like this, and yet he seems
Quite lucid.) 'Tis almost luncheon hour.
You must stay with me some few days, and talk
Of other themes, since this one does not suit.
'Tis pity all men are not of one mind,
Save where 'tis sweet to differ, difference lending
New wings to speculation.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

*Before SIR EDWARD STRANGE'S house. A moonlit night.
As WINIFRED ST. JOHN appears at a window giving
on the verandah, EDMOND COROT rises from a seat
on the lawn below.*

ED. I hoped that you would come.

WIN. The night is beautiful.

ED. Beautiful !

Beautiful as faith, or hope, or love,
Or some transfiguration of all three.
Beautiful as sunshine after storm,
As summer eves, when the fierce day has set,
As dawn, emergent from a night of wreck,
As gentle peace upon the steps of war,
Beautiful as are our dreams of heaven,—
It hath bewitched me with its potent charm.
Will you not come and share it ?

WIN. Ah, I see

You love the moonlight ; therefore am I glad :
I love it too—it soothes me and exalts.
It hath, indeed, a strange, a magic spell ;
It makes another world, another life,
And takes us to the brink of the unseen.

We seem encased in a vast silver shell,
Which, breathed upon, will burst, and we have found
The secret of all dreams.

Ed. My guess was true,
You surely are the spirit of the scene.
Or whence this lore enchanted? When you came,
And, all in white, framed by the window, stood.
I had been thinking of you. O'er the sky,
That tender, violet tent, my eye had ranged,
From star to timid star, set in the blue—
Then rested where the peerless queen held court
Here is the throne, I said, the radiant car,
But where its mistress? On the thought I turned,
And lo! you filled my vision. Yet my thought
Was swifter than my eyes, for it had gone
Straight to your form for answer.

WIN. Dian's throne
I should not care for ; 'tis too spacious quite.
The throne a Grecian goddess once has fill'd
Would scarcely suit a puny, earth-born girl.

ED. Will you not come and walk?

WIN. On such a night
The fairies should be out. Perchance Titania
Is somewhere near, and holding fairy revels.

ED. O let us look for them ; methinks I see them.
All in the glistening moonshine, chase each other
Through merry elvish sports, in tiny suits.
With moss-green velvet coats and saffron vests.
What rapture to behold Titania's self,
Surrounded by fay courtiers and attendants.—
Her dais a green mound, wherefrom she chides
At Oberon, who sulks in silence near !
Why do we tarry ? let us go at once.

This night we may be favored. If we find them—

WIN. If we do find them they must never know ;
It might be perilous were we discovered.
If we should hear strange sounds, or see the grass
Or flowers gently wave when there's no breeze,
We must tread softly and conceal ourselves.
Should they descry us, they might cause a cloud
To blot the moonshine out, and then assail us.
Or, at the best, they would pass out of sight,
And you should lose your rapture.

ED. We'll tread as we were moccasin'd by Sleep.
With steps as soft as darkness chasing light ;
Our shadows shall be heard as soon as we.

(They pass out and re-appear in a field at some distance.)

WIN. We have not found the fairies.

ED. In you glade,
Among the chequered patches, we may find them ;
Or, if not there, near those moss-covered boulders
They may be playing—Oberon appear !
King Oberon ! thou king of elves, appear !

WIN. Call you this noiselessness ? The land can hear
you.

ED. O, I am loud where speech is barren sound,
And I am silent where I long to speak.
I pray you, go no further—stay we here.
The queen of fairies we may never find,
The queen of night now hangs her silver lamp.
And you the only queen that I do find—
To you then pay I homage—Winifred,
Queen Winifred, I love you.

WIN. You love me ?

ED. Nay, do not turn away, but hear me speak.

And yet, what should I say, what can I say ?
 I still must say, I love you. From the first
 My soul has gone out to you. I am yours,
 To keep or turn away ; or at your side,
 Or further from you than hot hate can send.
 Not he, the shepherd lad, that dwelt on Latmos,
 When ravished by the vision of a goddess,
 And losing care for earth and earthly things,
 More yearned to find again his lost delight,
 Than I have longed to tell you my heart's pain.

WIN. I grieve to hear it. Why should you be pained ?

ED. You pity me : you do not turn away :
 You do not shrink : you are not angered then ?

WIN. Why, you have made me happy.

ED. My goddess !

WIN. I love to hear you say so ; yet I am
 No goddess, as you know.

ED. You are divine !

I love you, I do love you ! O how weak
 Are those three words to utter my true worship.
 This night has grown a temple ; it is holy.
 Beauty it had, and needed only love
 To make a shrine religious. Love is here,
 O love is here ! You love me—you do love me ?

WIN. You make me very happy.

ED. O, say you love me—even as I love you.

WIN. I love you.

I too can only say I love you—yet I love you.

ED. You bathe my soul in bliss. O, once again,
 Say once again, I love you.

WIN. I love you.

ED. Angel !

WIN. Now shall we find the fairies ?

ED. Yes, the fairies !

Ah now we know their haunts. Love now will lead us.
Love is to them akin, and he hath given us
A supersensuous charm. We can see
With fairy eyes, and hear with fairy ears.
We know their secrets ; in some sort, meseems.
I am a fairy—Oberon, mayhap,
And you my queen, Titania.

WIN. Shall I chide ?

And will you sulk in silence ?

ED. No, not we.

Good fairies we, and wise ones, my Titania.
Our fairy kingdom shall be also Love's—
You said you loved me ?

WIN. Did I, then, say so ?

You heard me say so ?

ED. O say it, say it quick !

I am in torment.

WIN. Yes, O yes, I love you.

And now we must return.

ED. 'Tis not yet time.

WIN. O yes, we shall be looked for ; it is late.

ED. Sweet, I could wish this night might never end
Then we should travel, with the tireless moon,
Far over fields where flowers and grasses sleep.
And over seas where spreads her silver path.
So strong I feel, fatigue should not come near me.
And, should you weary, I would bear you on.

WIN. We shall enjoy the day ; that too is sweet.
And so 'twill be to meet each morn, and wait
The happy eve's return.

ED. You will go ?

I shall not see you ? O, you must not go ?

We walk so quickly : I beseech you, rest.
Sweet, stay a little ! If aught ill should come,
And I not near to serve you, I should die.

WIL. We shall not part yet ; and 'tis but an hour,
A few short hours, till we shall meet again.

ED. And you will call my name if aught should hap ?
This night I shall not sleep, I watch with Love ;
And, should you summon me, I shall be near.

WIL. Dear love, my heart goes with you. From my
eyes
Love too will banish sleep, and we shall know
Our souls together are, though we be parted.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

*London. ST. JOHN'S Library. CORNELIA HOWARD
stands musingly.*

COR. Even I could love, but love is not for me,
Save for the general, for the abstract good ;
A partial, personal pleasure, such as this,
No doubt is sweet, but ah, 'tis not for me.
And yet, he's noble, very wise and noble.
He sees our aim, both what it lacks and holds.
Yet looks beyond it, and seeks something more.
So young and wise he is, so wise and gentle.
What can he want this morning with St. John?
News of his father it can scarcely be :
Such would not ask a whole hour's private talk.
There seemed a perturbation in his glance,
A bright, subdued excitement. Can it be?
It must be so—I guessed it from the first.
He loves her, and she him, and now he's come
To win St. John's consent to their betrothal.
Ah !

(Enter ST. JOHN and EDMOND COROT.)

ST. J. You must return at once ? Why then you
must ;

I will not urge your stay. Unto our friends
Give my most dear regards. To Winifred
Say that her father misses his dear daughter.
But, since he knows she's happy, he's content.

ED. Each day, sir, she laments her absence from you,
And your self-sought retirement. Could you not,
To give her joy, yourself much-needed rest,
Forsake your studies for a week's short space,
And journey down with me?

ST. J. Not now—within the month, perchance I
may.

COR. You find the Surrey air more pure than
London's,
And so you hasten back.

ED. A lovely land
This English isle, and England's greenest spot
Sir Edward Strange calls Surrey. There, indeed,
The year is lavish of her fairest gifts,
Now summer hath her reign, and, like a queen,
Herself supreme in beauty, doth enrobe
With royal state her chosen place of sojourn.

COR. Such praise from one, himself of foreign birth,
Rings sweetly in our ears who love our country.

ED. And now, adieu. I leave within the hour.
How soon may we expect my father home?

ST. J. Ah, that depends. It may be days, weeks,
months.

We should have heard ere this his first impressions,
And may have news of him at any moment.

ED. Heaven grant that he shall meet with no mis-
chance.

COR. Not only that mischance shall pass him by,
But that his fondest hopes, in secret shaped,
Shall there take form in noonday's bright reality.

ED. I fear the event.

COR. A friend you never were.

ED. A true, true friend. Good-bye.

ST. J. Good-bye.

COR. Good-bye—

I did not mean quite what I said.

ED. I know.

You'd have me something partial, but you see

My pride is to seem broad, unbiased, free.

(Exit EDMOND.)

ST. J. A good young fellow.

COR. Yes, both good and true.

ST. J. I am glad to hear you say so. Corot's son
Should be above the common. Now, indeed,

I have a special reason he should prove.

If not a great, at least a worthy man—

One true and faithful, thoughtful, gentle, kind.

COR. He is all this, methinks, and something more.
He may prove worthy—worthy of his father.

ST. J. I like—

*(The door opens. ST. JOHN and CORNELIA turn quickly.
GUSTAVE COROT enters, looking harassed and pale.
Perceiving ST. JOHN and CORNELIA, he smiles faintly,
wearily takes off his hat and drops it in a chair.
ST. JOHN and CORNELIA hurry forward to greet him.)*

ST. J. Why, Corot !

COR. Dear friend !

COROT. I have returned you see.

ST. J. Triumphant ?

COROT. Does it so appear ?

Then this poor front, I erewhile deemed so honest,
Has grown a skilled dissembler.

COR. You are weary.

Will you not sit, sir ?

COROT. Weary have I been.

But I am so no longer. The old fire—
Faith, I had thought there was no ember left—
Hath suddenly been fanned. Friends, I have failed.

ST. J. Failed?

COR. Oh no!

COROT. Oh no, you say. Alas, it is, oh yes!
Failed miserably, blankly, out of hope.
O, men are cowards! Had I ten true men,
I would not ask the ancient thinker's power:
We'd move the earth by will, mere force of will.
O, there is truth in that hyperbole
That faith can move e'en mountains. Give men faith—
But O, the cowards—no, the cowards!

ST. J. Sit down, Corot. You are unduly moved
And blown upon by passion.

COROT. O, St. John!

COR. Pray, sir, be seated.

COROT. (*Not heeding them.*) And if it were so?
If he were martyred—if we all were slain—
Were it not better so than die poltroons?
Why, what is life at best?

ST. J. You saw the president?

COROT. O yes, I saw him, my friend Jefferson.
My very dear friend, Thomas Jefferson,—
A diplomat, a shuffler, a time-server.
He deemed me such another; for, indeed,
Each word fell on me like a soft caress.
It was, my friend, my dear old friend, my Corot
If it were possible, but ah, 'tis plain,—
Do you not see, dear friend, we are not ripe?
And so would cozen me, but I sat grim,
And had no answering smile for this bland breath.
I thought to find a man, a sturdy man,

One who could fight and die. But this, why this—
A summer-bird, that fled at sight of snow !
A loungee in the sun ! An easy man,
A kind, good, easy man, who loved his comfort
Too well to disagree : who loved the people
So well that they must lead him by the nose,
And if to sure perdition, 'tis no matter—
Vox populi vox dei est, you know.

COR. How pitiful.

COROT. I hoped for better things,
And loved the man, ay, thought him true heroic.
Could he not dare ? What is won save by daring ?
Show me a man will stand above the crowd,
And point the way ; one who will boldly serve
Naught but the truth, not people, king or lord,
But the untainted truth ; one who will lead
No other whither, and will not be led
Save to that perfect goal. O, such a man,
Were he a leader, what might he accomplish !

ST. J. What think you of the conqueror ?

COROT. Of whom ?

ST. J. Your young French captain—he at least can
lead.

COR. Oh yes !

COROT. Ah yes, he is my hope, my only one :
It seems 'a slender staff, now, but may prove—

ST. J. You'll try him then ?

COROT. He lacks not courage—
I fear, friends, I am weary, as you say.

(*He grasps the arm of a chair, and sinks heavily into it.*)

CORNELIA crosses quickly to his side.)

COR. O, you are faint.

ST. J. You need rest and refreshment.
Can you walk, think you, to the next room?

COROT. There, I am better. Yes, I will go with you.

[*Ereunt.*—ST. JOHN *leading the way.* CORNELIA
follows COROT, pityingly.]

SCENE II.

*A Parlor at SIR EDWARD STRANGE'S. LADY STRANGE,
ALICIA MAYNARD and ALBERT STRANGE are sitting
in a corner of the room, chatting. A little apart,
SIR EDWARD STRANGE sits in an arm-chair, reading.
He closes his book with a yawn, puts it down, and
walks to the window.*

SIR ED. Still billing, cooing—what a pair of doves !
Dan Cupid hath been busy here of late.

(The others draw to the window.)

Why, now the earth is bright : so sweet a pair
Ne'er trod a flower-strewn path. How he hangs o'er
 her.

And how she turns to him. No common air
Is this they breathe : one sees its touch is velvet.
Its taste intoxication. Yon blue sky
Is no mere azure : 'tis a palace roof,
O'er-hung with folds of crimson, purple, gold.
In most sweet order spread to make them beauty--

ALL. See, now they stand.

SIR ED. As if they'd stand forever.
Again they move, like swans upon a lake,
When June shines softly on its lapping waves,
Now up, now down, with the fresh wat'ry motion.
The swans feel that 'tis June, that the sun shines,

The water's warm, and no more feel they.
 They move or stand or sit, all heedless which.
 Ah there, a burst of mirth—what sweet accord !
 What rippling music, in what perfect time.
 Their very bodies sway melodiously—
 And this is youth and love.

LADY S. We trust you are not envious.

ALB. At heart he is yet young.

SIR ED. Alack ! 'tis but a spectre.

I too have seen the rose, I too have worn it ;
 What now remains are some few faded leaves
 And memory of an odor.

ALL. This is treason.
 Love's rose blooms ever, ever should smell sweet.
 What says to this my lady ?

LADY S. We grow old ;
 And, as we fade, that which we were grows dim
 At last to thought itself.

SIR ED. No treason this :
 Best loyalty unto our liege-lord, Love,
 Demands no falsehood to our lady Truth.
 We held our rose together, loved its lustre,
 It faded as all earthly flowers fade ;
 Belike in some fair land, where love is law,
 Our rose will bloom forever.

ALL. If it fade
 Before it leave our earth, how can it, then,
 Renew its beauty in another clime ?

ALB. It fades because life fades ; when life's at glow
 Love then is at the purple. Perfect life
 Would bring a perfect love ; so, in that life
 Immortal that we dream of, that we hope,
 Love too must needs be deathless.

LADY S. That, I trust,
Is more than a dim dream, than a faint hope :
We are assured it waits us, this life done.

ALL. What happiness !

SIR ED. Mixed with what bitterness,
Down go we, trudging life's steep, thorny way.
Bleeding and footsore often, when we might,
Had hearts but courage, kiss our hand to Time.
And, with one happy sigh, undo the gate
That lets to the hereafter ; there, with love
And youth perennial, evermore to dwell.
Yet sadly here we cling to imperfection ;
Why not abridge it all ?

LADY S. And take a life?
Commit self-murder?

ALL. See you not he jests?

SIR ED. So 'twere but going from this room to the next.

Or the next street, why then each one were valiant.
There then would be a varied, vast procession
From earth to after-earth. But men are babes—
They fear the darkness. Night they dread, dark night,
Without a morrow. Sprung from the unknown,
They dread once more to lose themselves therein.

Ala. What gruesome talk ! To lose—to lose one's self !
To lose one's self in forest or at sea
I know is possible. But from one's self,
One's very self, to part, were strange indeed.

ALB. And yet we do it in sleep.

ALL. When that last sleep
Hath fallen upon my lids, I trust sincerely
On waking, I shall find my very self :
And, when I rub my eyes, I shall look round

To see if Winifred is nowhere near,
And whether—

ALB. (*Whispering.*) A dearer still is not in easy call.

LADY S. Which brings us back at once to very life—
On life's high current Winifred now sails.

ALB. Why, so do others.

LADY S. Then 'tis wind of fancy
Alone that wafts them down the Stygian stream.

SIR ED. We'll have a double wedding.

LADY S. Think you so?
Think you he'll ask her?

SIR ED. If he's half a man.

LADY S. And that she'll have him?

SIR ED. Since she is a woman,
And yet that's shallow; 'tis the other way.

She may not know because she is a woman.

Grant that she loves him. Who can say? not she.

She might love some one better.—Yet she's one
That knows her own mind fairly.

LADY S. She is rich.
And he, I hear, has nothing.

SIR ED. He have nothing!
That brave young man have nothing! Rather say
He nothing lacks. Why, power is in his step,
Wealth in his bearing, greatness in his mould,
Nature has marked him precious; she has stamped
On eye, cheek, chin, hand, lip, an easy tale,
Proof unmistakable that she has here
Been signally successful. Rare creation,
Distinction high, sits on him—His is wealth,
Not of the baser, but the nobler sort.
Riches may melt, but there is something here
Than gold more durable and far more rare.

ALL. I do think Winifred is of your mind,
Though she will not admit it.

LADY S. Then he's French—

ALL. And therefore knows to win a lady's heart.

LADY S. Her father may object.

ALL. Her father loves his
father.

LADY S. That's not to love himself :
There are degrees in liking.

SIR ED. As in hating.
St. John will not object. He knows too well
What virtue's in a man ; and, if they love
He'll gladly see them wed.

(*Enter* SIR EDWARD *and* LADY STRANGE.)

ALB. (*Putting his arm around ALICIA'S waist.*)

Come, mistress, answer me in sober earnest.

Do Frenchmen, then, excel in winning hearts?

ALI. O yes.

ALB. Excel us English?

ALL. O yes, indeed.

ALB. Nay, say not so.

ALL. But what if it be true. One must tell truth.
They are so gallant, amiable and gay,
So stuffed with romance and fine sentiment,
So variously accomplished in each art,
Dress, manner, conversation,—all that wins
And captivates a lady's erring fancy.

ALB. (*Releasing her.*) They are not more enchanting
than their sisters,
The glowing, dark-eyed daughters of the South.
Some have I seen on my excursions thither
Would, in a contest with our English maids,

Bear off the prize for beauty.

ALL.

Ha ! ha ! ha !

You think to make me jealous,—you pretend.

ALB. I do remember once I stayed at Dijon :
There was a master-jeweller in that town
Had such a peerless daughter. He was famed
For his great wealth, as she for perfect beauty.
A score of suitors came and went about her,
Like moths about a flame. One summer night,
Persuaded by a friend, I found her door,
And with him entered. She was in the garden :
And there we followed her, and there I saw
A paragon of female loveliness.

ALL. Was she so pretty ?

ALB.

Till that summer night

I had seen nothing that was half so fair.

ALL. How did she look ?

ALB.

Ah, there description halts.

Were I a painter and a poet too,

She still would go beyond me, even as nature
Still leaves behind the best that art can do.

ALL. Tell me in some sort how she seemed. Was she
Or tall or short, or stout or slim, or dark or fair ?

ALB.

O, she was none of these.

She was all symmetry, all perfect color ;

When she did move she seemed to tread the air,

That gently barred her passage, then gave way

On sweet compulsion but to waft her on,

When well within the garden I observed,

At some short distance, a pavilion lighted ;

Toward this we bent our steps. A twilight haze,

Mixed with the scent of flowers, hung o'er the spot.

We found her seated there with certain others,

Ladies and gentlemen ; but when I saw her,
Eyes had I for none else. She drew regard
As doth the magnet steel. A ruby she
Set round with pearls, that served but to enhance
The central gem's magnificence and fire.

ALL. And was she dark or fair ?

ALB. Her eyes were dark,
Large, soft and lustrous ; a rich glow suffused
A cheek of delicate oval, and her lips
Parted in smiles that showed such lovely lines,
Such cherry ripeness and—

ALL. Such teeth of snow.

ALB. Yes, yes,—and—

ALL. O yes, I make no doubt her teeth were false.
And what became of her, this dark-eyed beauty ?

ALB. Alas, she married.

ALL. What a fall ! to give
Such heavenly loveliness to one poor man !
Mayhap her suitors loved her father's wealth.

ALB. They were too various ; some were old, some
young.

And some of middle life.

ALL. The middle-aged and old we may suspect.
But come, sir, tell me if you have not seen
A fairer still than this French gypsy-woman ?

ALB. I may have seen *one* fairer.

ALL. Who was she ?

ALB. I may not tell. You might not think her so,—
Being but an Englishman, you would suppose
My taste defective.

ALL. You Englishmen are very well. Who was she ?

ALB. I may not tell.

ALL. Looked she at all like me ?

ALB. Something like.

ALI. Well, now I will retract what I have said
In favor of the French. Now praise I England,
And men of English blood. A race so handsome
The sun ne'er shone on,—they are witty, brave,
In friendship generous, in battle dangerous,
Gallant in love and perfect men at all times.
Now tell me who she was?

ALB. Come with me to the garden ; there I'll tell.
Her picture I have with me, you shall see it.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Paris. The Presence-Chamber at the Tuileries. Soldiers without on guard. A Secretary, who has been writing at a table, rises quickly folds some papers and withdraws. Enter two OFFICERS, meeting.

1ST OFF. 'Tis on the stroke of one, and—

2ND OFF. The Emperor !

(*OFFICERS fall back. Enter BUONAPARTE in State attire, followed by PRINCE TALLEYRAND and certain officers. BUONAPARTE takes his seat. Officers draw up behind him, a little to the left. TALLEYRAND stands at his side.*)

BUON. Waits the ambassador without ?

TAL. Sire, he has not arrived ; to-morrow is he due.

BUON. Why, 'tis to-day.

TAL. Nay, sire, the ninth, to-morrow.

BUON. The Austrian despatches are prepared ?

TAL. (*Presenting papers.*) For your approval, sire.

(BUONAPARTE glances at papers, writes, and returns them to minister. TALLEYRAND signs to officer, who comes forward.)

TAL. These, General, are entrusted to your care.
To be delivered only to the emperor ;
You know their import.

(Officer receives papers and bows)

BUON. Be diligent, General.
Deserve well of your emperor. Your mission
Is momentous.

(Officer bows and withdraws.)

BUON. What other business ?

TAL. This also, sire,
Asks your approval and sign-manual.

(BUONAPARTE reads and signs certain papers. Another officer advances and receives them from the minister, who speaks a few words of instruction in a low tone.)

BUON. Who are those would have audience ?

TAL. (Presenting cards.)
The King of Sweden's envoy waits without.

BUON. We shall not see him. He must come again :
We have not yet decided. Nor these others—
To-morrow they may come. Whom have we here ?
Corot ? Corot ? ah, this is the eccentric
Who thinks we hold a wand to new-make France—
He's an original. You may admit him.

(An officer goes out, and returns, followed by COROT)

BUON. Pray leave us to ourselves.

(TALLEYRAND *and officers retire.*)

COROT. I trust, sir—(BUONAPARTE *frowns*)

OFFICER. (*In a low tone.*)

Address His Majesty as sire, stupid. (*Exit officer.*)

COROT. Sire, I do trust that I have not o'er-stepped
The limits of propriety in thus
Obtruding my poor presence on your notice!

BUON. No.

COROT. You have received my letter, sire.

BUON. Yes.

COROT. Ah,—may I hope the scheme therein outlined
Commends itself unto Your Highness' wisdom.

BUON. In faith, I know not what to make of it.
This scheme of yours seems scarcely practicable;
And yet it hath some promise. It were well,
If it were possible, to make of France
A nation of wise thinkers and good men.
The French love glory more than virtue. Yet
You think there is a way to make them love
True virtue more than glory.

COROT. Glory you have given them,
E'en to their heart's content. They're steeped in glory—
Its gilded aureole crowns each Frenchman's brow.
But glory is not gladness. Could you, now—
And that you can with ease I think is clear,
Such is your power and undiminished greatness,—
Give men high thoughts of life, lead them to drink
At wisdom's fount, and from the poisoned well,
Where superstition's snake lies coiled unseen,
You then had given a glory that would live
When beat of battle's drum is stilled forever.

BUON. Men are but men, and Frenchmen only
Frenchmen ;
You cannot make them philosophic angels,
And yet your scheme attracts me.

COROT. It aims at that
Which life has aimed at since society
First came to form—Nature's culmination
And crowning work, a perfect people.

BUON. Men are men.
And yet, this might be done. I have the power.

COROT. More beautiful than Greece, more grand than
Rome,
Of luminous intellect and rich in feeling,
In form more perfect, in expression fairer
Than aught the world has seen, the new state waits,
And one day shall appear. Shall it be now ?
Within your life and mine it may have birth.
Let be the means assured, the cause made firm,
And the desired effect will safely follow.

BUON. You'd have me do no end of sacrilege :
Deprive the people of their Holy Church,
Or give their Holy Church into the hands
Of infidels, who'd teach Voltaire and Rousseau.
You say to teach the laws of life and nature.
What care the common people for your laws ?
What laws are there so strong as the good God ?
And, should you interfere with Holy Church,
They would demonstrate with exceeding force
That they were instruments of this good God,
To wreak on you His vengeance.

COROT. Think you so ?
Methinks the hold of Holy Church grows weak ;
It hath been greatly shaken. Were the priests

But quietly dismissed, and scientists
 Set in their places, who would teach men truths ;
 Matters of interest touching life and death ;
 Communicate to them the modern views
 Of cause and consequence, and all that proves
 So fascinating to the modern mind—
 They'd soon forget that they had worn chains
 And even loved their bondage.

BUON. We have talked enough.
 One side of me leans to this scheme of yours,
 The other drags me from it. I have doubt
 Whether I long for perfect human lives.
 Were France this state ideal you describe,
 She would not want her emperor.

COROT. But sire—

BUON. We'll turn it o'er. To-morrow come and see
 us.

At this same hour we will receive you here.
 You have been highly favored ; 'tis our wish
 To encourage by our favor men of mind.

[BOUNAPARTE rises, and his suite enters. COROT bows
 and is led out. Exit the EMPEROR and train.]

SCENE IV.

The same. An anteroom. Enter COROT and OFFICER.

COROT. By the emperor's permission I am here.
 He bade me wait upon him at this hour.

OFF. I know it, sir. Continue here a space.
 I shall return and conduct you to him.
 (*Exit Officer.*)

COROT. Though haughty, he seemed gracious. Better
 so,
 Than pleasantly to listen, and to smile
 Away my scheme as so much idle breath.
 Since Jefferson has failed me all depends
 On his far-reaching insight and ambition.

What stays the man? he said he would return.
 Why should I wait him? since I know the way
 I'll be my own conductor.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE V.

*The Presence-Chamber. The EMPEROR pacing to and
 fro. The ENGLISH AMBASSADOR standing near.
 Officers and gentlemen in the background.*

BUON. 'Tis not to be endured, sir; 'tis insufferable.
 These scurrilous attacks upon our person.
 Your press has too great freedom. Tell the king
 Restraint must be put on this too free press.
 Do they want war? Certes, we fear not war!
 We need not fear it, for the French can fight;
 They've proven that they can fight; and though I strive,
 Peace-lover as I am, to quell the tumult,
 My people will not brook these shameful insults
 Flung at their Emperor. They mutter now,
 Their mutterings may grow clamorous.

AMB. The government, sire, should not be held
 responsible
 For national dislikes; they disapprove
 The intemperate language that has given you umbrage.
 But then I fear the press cannot be muzzled.

BUON. And for those other matters in dispute,
We've given our final word.—You had it, sir,
When last you left us. Now, returned, you ask
The self-same question that we answered clear.
Is France a merchant to be chaffered with
For goods across a counter? They mistake—
They do mistake us, sir, those traders there!
We are not to be hood-winked. Yes or no.
Your king can give, and—

(Enter COROT.)

What fellow's this? Are there no guards about?
Turn out this madman! how came he within?
We are not safe from madmen or from fools
Even in our own walls. Look after him—
Out with him!

OFFICER. You should not have come here, sir: you
must go.

How came you in—was no one at the door?

COROT. *(dully.)* The Emperor yesterday was very
kind;

He bade me come this morning.

OFFICER. He's in no mood to hear you now, sir—
move—

Away—move on—you must go out, sir!

(Turns COROT about.)

This way, sir.—You must go.

(Exeunt COROT and officer.)

BUON. Fools! idiots! dolts! And now, sir,
quietly.—

You know our will and fixed determination,
Report it to the king. We shall expect
Ampler consideration at his hands
Than we have yet received.

[AMBASSADOR bows. *Exeunt* EMPEROR and train]

SCENE VI.

*The Drawing-Room at SIR EDWARD STRANGE'S. ULRIC
ST. JOHN and LADY STRANGE discovered in earnest
conversation. Enter ALICIA MAYNARD, WINIFRED
ST. JOHN, SIR EDWARD STRANGE, EDMOND COROT
and ALBERT STRANGE.*

SIR ED. Surprised? Not I. I saw it from the first.
How else could it fall out?

ALL.

Why, all ways else.

SIR ED. Nay, nay, there was but one—more strictly
two:

Four ways led hither—hence they go out two:
Four souls came hither, each in quest of love,
On one side beauty, on the other strength,
The ivy and the oak, or rather say
True woman and true man, for there is naught
In nature can afford fit parallel
To this communion, Nature's crowning good.
My dears, life was at flood, and the streams met.
Who saw not they would mingle?

ALL.

I, for one:

Did you see, Winifred?

WIN.

In truth, not I.

SIR ED. O no, not ye! ye see! Indeed, not ye!

LADY S. Sir Edward, fie.

ST. J.

The girls are pleased, why not?

SIR ED. Well, well, St. John ! We saw the day, we
too ;

We once were young ; we, too, heard wedding-bells.
Yours I remember. What a day was that !
I mind a lusty good-wife threw some rice,
And, as she threw, your coachman gave a hitch
And turned his head, so got it in his eye ;
Just then an old shoe struck him on the back,
And, being a peppery knave, at the loud mirth
He straight pulled up, and swore he'd have her life
That threw the shoe. All feared the day was marred,
But some one soothed him and you rolled away.

ST. J. Yes, I remember, 'twas a day in June :
The earth swam in a golden bath of light ;
And, in the crystal air, the fresh-hued flowers,
The living verdure and the murmurous trees
Seemed washed and brightened as for holiday.

ED. May, too, is a fair month.

ALB. Ay, very fair.

SIR ED. Why, truly, very fair.

ALL. A somewhat changeful month :
But what of it—it matters not to us.
What nonsense we do talk ! I faint for air,
And pine to see the fox was caught yest're'n.
Wilt come, Winona ?

WIN.

Willingly.

(*Exeunt WINIFRED and ALICIA.*)

ALB.

The fox !

That gay, young, frisky fox. I, too, would see him.

(*Aside to EDMOND.*)

Do you not feel a yearning for this fox ?

ED. He had a wondrous tail. I long to see it.

(*Eccent* ALBERT and EDMOND.)

SIR ED. Ha ! ha ! ha ! St. John, did you mark that ?
The fox, O yes, the fox. A gay, young fox ;
A gay and frisky fox. Well, well, St. John,
'Tis long since you've been with us.

LADY S. Twice three years.

ST. J. Is it so long ? It seems but yesterday
I walked with you in the orchard, while your boy.
He seemed scarce more, hung in a cherry bough,
And tossed thick branches of the scarlet fruit
To my slim girl, who caught them as they fell.
They now are man and woman, soon to leave
The parent roof-tree.

LADY S. Yes ; and how we wished
That they could make a pair.

SIR ED. Since they are happy,
We can wish no more.

ST. J. They seem well-suited.
Young Corot should be worthy, - if his face
And noble parentage are to be trusted.

SIR ED. I have observed him nearly, and will say,
Praise can no further go, I do believe
Him worthy of your daughter.

LADY S. We have heard
That you esteem his father.

ST. J. At the highest ;
A nobler ne'er drew breath.

(*Enter* SERVANT.)

SERV. A lady hath arrived poste-haste from London,
And wishes instant speech with Mr. St. John.

ST. J. Her name?

SERV. Miss Howard.

ST. J. Cornelia ! come post-haste. What, then, can be
The spur to this occasion, what the occasion ?
I pray you ask the lady to step hither.

(Exit SERVANT.)

SIR ED. Should we withdraw ?

ST. J. Indeed, on no account. I cannot think
What news should be so pressing.

(Enter CORNELIA.)

ST. J. What, Cornelia. Now this is kind indeed.
So you have changed your mind, and at the last
Decided to come down. The greater pleasure—

COR. I come—

LADY S. Miss Howard is very welcome.

COR. Alas, I bring ill news.

ST. J. Ill news, Cornelia.
Whence ? Of whom ?

COR. Of one we both
Had lately learned to love.

ST. J. Is't Corot ?

COR. Yes, he.

ST. J. Not dead ?

COR. Dead.

ST. J. My poor, poor friend. My kind, true-hearted
friend.

Alas, Cornelia, how came it about ? This loss is large.
It is not ours alone.

COR. I know but little,
Save what may be inferred from the bare fact.
In a poor room in Paris he was found.

Stark dead, his arms outstretched upon a bed.
His head upon his arms. Life had stopped ;
A weight had come upon him past his strength ;
The waves of disappointment, mounting high,
Had dragged him under,—this we may surmise.

LADY S. Alas ! poor man—poor Edmond.

SIR ED. Aye, poor Edmond. 'Tis a funeral now.

ST. J. And is that all, Cornelia ?

COR. He had been with the emperor ; this they
know.

Mayhap had ill reception. He was seen
After the interview, and, staggering, walked
As one who'd had a blow. When seen again,
His soul had sped where emperors nor kings
Can send one whisper after.

ST. J.

All at end :

The hopes, the fears, the high attempt for man :
The labor, self-forgotten, toward great ends.
Prone is the titan, and the pigmy race
He might have led to actions worthy men,
Oblivions of their loss, will crow and scream,
Caper and trot 'twixt cradle and the grave,
Make war and chaffer, strut and sweat, nor dream
That noble living can be aught but this.
Ah, who shall take his place,—the years may wait
Long e'er comes such another !

LADY S. Poor man—was he so good ?

ST. J. So good !

(*Enter ALICIA, WINIFRED, EDMOND and ALBERT.*)

ALL. When twice seven years are done, ye may come
see us ;

By then we may have wisdom—eh, Winona ?

Your son, Sir Edward, claims women lack wisdom,
Whereof men have monopoly. Hence we maids
Have broke our troth, and mean to go to college.
So we may be fit mates for so much wisdom.
But what grave faces—(*seeing CORNELIA.*) Oh !

ST. J. Edmond, I pray return with me to the garden :
There's something you must hear.

ED. My father !

(*Exeunt ST. JOHN and EDMOND.*)

WIN. O there is some misfortune ! Is he dead ?
Is Edmond's father dead ?

SIR ED. Be calm, my child.
If death it be, then is it for the best.
It is a world, we know, where birth and death
Tread on each others kibes ; the self-same hour
Sees joy and lamentation, side by side
The cradle and the coffin—till they seem
Twin buds almost upon our tree of life :
Nor know we which is best, yet both are good.

LADY S. Winifred, dear, come with me to my room ;
And you Miss Howard,—you too, Alicia.

ALL. Poor, poor Edmond !

[*Exeunt.*]

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